INRI

THE
LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE YOUNG

Nicodemus Cometh to Jesus by Night

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—*St. Matt. iii: 1–3, 5–7.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

It is frequently recorded that Jesus, for the sake of privacy and retirement, chose rather to spend the hours of rest in the open air, than in the comparative publicity and in the stifling atmosphere of an Eastern dwelling-room. We are justified, therefore, in preferring the housetop to the guest-chamber in endeavoring to visualize the secret interview which took place when "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night."

THE

LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

FOR THE YOUNG

BY THE

REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.

AND

HIS LIFE DEPICTED IN A

GALLERY OF EIGHTY PAINTINGS

BY

WILLIAM HOLE

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

VOL. II

PHILADELPHIA

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CHRIST, THE SHEPHERD

AMONG the names or titles by which Jesus, our Saviour, was spoken of in the Old Testament, there is none that is oftener used than this name of Shepherd. If we look all through the Bible, we shall find that there are about twenty different places in which this title is given to him. David was speaking of him, when he said, "The Lord is my shepherd." Ps. xxiii: 1. And so again in Ps. lxxx: 1, when he says,—"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." The prophet Ezekiel—(Ch. xxxiv: 23), speaks of him as "*one* Shepherd," who was to be set up over his flock. He was called "*one* Shepherd," because there never was to be another like him. In one place God, the Father calls him "*my* Shepherd." He says "Awake, O sword, against the man that is *my* Shepherd." Zach. xiii: 7. And he might well speak of him in this way, because it was he

who gave him to be our shepherd. And when Jesus came into our world he applied these Old Testament titles unto himself. He said,—"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John x: 11.

The apostle Paul calls him—"that *great* shepherd of the sheep." Heb. xiii: 20. And the apostle Peter calls him, in one place, the shepherd and bishop of our souls." I. Peter ii: 25. And in another place he speaks of him as—"the *chief* shepherd." I. Peter v: 4. And while there are nearly twenty places in the Bible, in which Jesus is spoken of as a shepherd, there are more than fifty places in which his people are spoken of as sheep, or lambs.

And this word shepherd is one of the sweetest titles given to Jesus, our Saviour, in the Bible. It is very instructive. It teaches us what Jesus was to be to his people, and what he was to do for them. Sheep and lambs are interesting creatures. When we walk through the beautiful green fields in summer, we love to see the flocks of sheep quietly feeding there, and the young lambs frisking and playing about them.

But, in our country, shepherds are not so interesting as they were in the lands where the Bible was written. And the reason is that our

way of keeping sheep is so different from what it was there. Our farmers generally have no wild beasts to be afraid of. Their fields, too, are all fenced in. And so, when the shepherd turns a flock of sheep into the field, all he has to do is to put up the bars, and the sheep are safe. He does not have to stay there with them and watch them all the time. But it is different in eastern countries. Wild beasts prowl about there. And the fields have no fences around them. In journeying for forty days through the Holy Land, I do not remember to have seen a single fence. Of course then, the shepherd could not leave his sheep. He had to stay with them as long as they were out at pasture. He had to watch them both by day and by night. You remember, that the shepherds of Bethlehem were "keeping watch over their flock *by night*," when the angel of the Lord appeared to tell them of the Saviour's birth. And, if we remember all that a shepherd, in those eastern countries, had to do for his sheep, then, when we find the prophets speaking of Jesus as one who was to be a shepherd and when we find him calling himself "the good shepherd," we may learn a great deal from this subject about what he was to do for his people.

We can easily think of *four* things which the shepherd did for his sheep. And when we see that these are the very things that Jesus does for us, we can understand how truly he may be called "The Shepherd."

The first thing that a shepherd does for his sheep is, that—HE SEEKS THEM *when lost.*

When Jesus was on earth, in one of his beautiful parables, he said: "If a man have a hundred sheep, and lose one of them, he leaveth the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goeth after that which is lost until he find it." This is only what any shepherd would do in the East when he had lost one of his sheep. And shepherds in other countries would do the same.

An English minister of the gospel, who was spending the summer in Switzerland, gives an interesting account of a Swiss shepherd, one of whose lambs had wandered away from the flock and was lost. The shepherd went after it to try and find it. He wandered away off into a wild part of the mountains, where there was no beaten path. Then he looked around in every direction. He called aloud to the lamb, and then listened to hear an answer to his call. After calling many times he thought he heard

a faint sound. Again he called, and listened. He heard the sound again. It was the bleating of a lamb. It seemed to come from a distance, far below where he stood. He went to the edge of a rock, and looked carefully over a steep precipice down into the valley, or chasm that opened beneath. There, far below, he saw the lamb on a little ledge, projecting from the steep side of the mountain. There was no path leading to it, either from above or from below. After studying awhile he saw that there was a ledge in the rock, about twenty feet above where the lamb was; and if he could only get down to this ledge he felt sure he could haul it up with a rope. Then he went home and got some ropes, and took some friends along with him. On returning to the place, he fastened one of the ropes under his arms, and taking another rope in his hand, was lowered down over the edge of the precipice by his friends. There he was, for awhile, hanging by that rope over the awful depth that lay beneath him. Gently they lowered him down, farther and farther. At last he reached the ledge, and landed safely on it. Then he was about twenty feet above the lamb. It was impossible for him to get any nearer to it. Then he took the rope he

had brought with him, and making a slip-knot, or noose, in the end of it, he lowered it down, and tried to get it over the head of the lamb, that, in this way, he might draw it up. But the lamb shook its head every time the rope came near it, and was not willing to be caught in the noose. But the shepherd kept on trying, and finally the noose slipped over the lamb's head, and in a moment, before he could be much hurt, he was drawn up to the ledge where the shepherd was. Then taking the poor lamb in his arms, the shepherd signalled to his friends above. They drew him safely up, and so the lost lamb was found and brought back in safety to the fold.

And when we think of this poor lamb that had wandered from the fold, and was lost upon the mountains, we have a good illustration of our condition as we are born into this world. The Bible says,—"*All we, like sheep, have gone astray.*" Is. liii: 6. And it is because we have wandered off from God, and have lost ourselves, that Jesus, the "Good Shepherd" came to seek and to find us. This is what he is doing all the time. He is going after the sheep and the lambs that have lost their way, and trying to bring them back to himself.

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost,
Out in the desert he heard its cry—
Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

And it is wonderful how many strange ways Jesus takes, and what surprising means he uses to find his lost lambs and bring them back to his fold. It would be easy to fill a volume with illustrations of the different ways in which this is done, but we have only room for one or two. Generally, he makes use of Christian parents, or Christian teachers, to bring the lost lambs into his fold. But he has many other ways besides this.

"Jesus Sought Him." A Chinaman applied to a minister to be allowed to join his church. The minister asked him some questions to find out whether he understood what it is to be a Christian, and how we are to be saved. Among other things, he asked him,—"How did you find Jesus?" In his broken English, the poor man replied:—"Me no find Jesus at all. *Jesus him find me.*"

"Awakened at the Bottom of the Sea." A missionary of the South Sea Islands was very much interested in one of the natives who

attended his church. This man was a pearl-diver. He was much impressed by a sermon he heard the missionary preach one Sunday, on the text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi: 28. The missionary had many talks with this man, and tried all he could to persuade him to become a Christian. But he would not listen to him. He drove away all serious thoughts from his mind, and resolved that he would not become a Christian.

After awhile, when he was down at the bottom of the sea seeking for pearls, he picked up a shell that had some writing on it. He looked at it for a moment, and saw the missionary's text,—"Come unto me, etc." "Well," said he to himself, "this is very strange. If the voice of God is following me to the bottom of the sea, it's time for me to listen to it." And he did so. He soon became a Christian. And that shell through which God had spoken to him so strangely from the bottom of the sea, he always afterwards kept on the table in his room on which his Bible stood.

What a curious museum it would make if we could have collected together an account of all the different means that Jesus has employed to bring his lost sheep back to himself!

Jesus and the Samaritan at Jacob's Well

He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.—*St. John iv: 3–10.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Jacob's well, which is situated about a mile from Shechem, is of great depth, and the consequent labor of drawing water has to a certain extent been reduced by constructing the mouth of the well in what is now an underground chamber, but which at a former period was probably an open area to which access was obtained by a flight of steps. The slopes of Mount Gerizim are dimly discernible in the picture, shimmering in the dust-haze of the enervating sirocco.

The first thing that Jesus, as the shepherd does for his sheep, is that he seeks them when lost.

But when a shepherd has found his sheep, the next thing he does for them is, to—FEED AND TAKE CARE OF THEM.

And it was just this view of what Jesus, the good Shepherd, was to do for his sheep that the prophet Isaiah was speaking of, when he said:—"He shall feed his flock, like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom." Is. xl: 11. The shepherd leads his flock to places where there is good pasture for them; and when the pasture is eaten up in one place, he seeks out another for them, and leads them to it.

A gentleman who was spending some time at the city of Berne, in Switzerland, saw a good deal of the care which the shepherds there take of their flocks, and as it illustrates this part of our subject, I will quote here, a part of what he says:—"One evening, as I was walking over the hills which surround the city, and looking at the distant Alps, in all the golden glory of the sunset, I saw a shepherd coming up the grassy-slope of the mountain followed by a flock of sheep. Presently he stopped, and sat down on

a stone, while the sheep began to graze around him. As I came near him, I saw he was fondling and playing with one of the lambs. I stood and watched him. He called gently, and two or three of the sheep and lambs came running up to him, and ate out of his hand the grass which he had plucked for them. Then they nestled down at his feet, as we often see a dog do. He took up one of the lambs and held it in his arms. I was very much interested in all this. I asked him if he ever used a dog to help him take care of his sheep.

"'No,' said he, 'they always mind when I call them, and do what I tell them to do.'

"When I heard this, I said to myself, 'Ah! I wonder if the "Good Shepherd" can say this of all his sheep and lambs?'

"While he was speaking, I plucked some grass, and offered it to two of the lambs nearest to me. They began to eat; but as soon as the shepherd called them, though he offered them nothing, they left me and ran to his side. I tried to imitate his call, but they took no notice of me. And then I thought of the words of Jesus, when he said, 'My sheep hear my voice, and follow me. *But a stranger will they not hear, for they know not the voice of strangers.*' John x: 5.

"Soon after this he rose, and went down the hill, followed by his faithful flock, and I went home, feeling that I never understood so well before, how 'the Good Shepherd' feeds his sheep and takes care of them. The Bible, with all the precious truths and promises that it contains, is the green pasture into which he leads his flock, and where he feeds them with food convenient for them."

But he *cares for* his sheep, as well as feeds them. We are told to "cast all our care on him, for *he careth for us.*" How many incidents we meet with that show us what great and tender care "the Good Shepherd" takes of his sheep and lambs.

"The Orphan Provided For." A gentleman was walking one day in the streets of Philadelphia, when a little boy met him, and asked him for a penny. At first he felt disposed to send him off without giving him anything; but there was something in the little fellow's face that interested him; so he said to him:—"What do you want a penny for, my boy?"

"To buy some bread, sir," was the ready answer.

"Have you had nothing to eat to-day?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Boy, are you really telling the truth?" he asked, as he looked the boy earnestly in the face.

"Indeed I am, sir," said the boy; and as he said this, the tears started into his eyes.

"Have you a father?" asked the gentleman, who now felt interested in the boy.

"No, sir, father is dead."

"Where is your mother?"

"She died last night. Come with me, sir, and I'll show you where my mother is."

Taking the hand of the boy, the gentleman went with him down a narrow alley, and stopped before a poor, miserable place, which the boy called home. Pushing open a door, he pointed to a dead body that lay upon a heap of straw, saying,—"There is my mother, sir." Then he burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break. The gentleman could not keep from joining his own tears with those of the poor orphan boy.

"Who was with your mother when she died, my boy?" asked the stranger.

"Nobody but me, sir."

"Did your mother say anything before she died?"

"Yes, sir; she said God will take care of you, my son."

Sooner than that dying mother had dared to hope, God had honored and rewarded her faith in him, by sending to her poor, lonely and friendless boy, one whose heart was touched with tender pity for him. This gentleman was a good Christian man. He was very well off. He took that orphan child to his home, and brought him up as his own child. But it was Jesus, "the Good Shepherd" who did this. He heard the prayer of that dying mother, when she asked him to take care of the poor child, about to be left alone in the world. Jesus saw that helpless little one in his loneliness. He led the boy to ask a penny from that gentleman. He caused him to listen to the boy, and feel an interest in him. And he put it into the heart of that gentleman to feel pity for the boy, to become a friend and father to him, and take him to his own home. Here we have a good illustration of one of the ways in which "the Good Shepherd" takes care of his sheep and lambs. And so we may well say that the second thing which a shepherd does for his sheep is to feed them, and take care of them. And Jesus may well be called a shepherd, because this is what he does for the sheep of his flock.

But there is a third thing that a shepherd does for his sheep, he—PROTECTS—*them.*

Sheep are weak and feeble creatures. They are needy creatures, too, and are not able to provide for their own wants. And then they are exposed to many dangers. Wolves, and bears, and lions are their enemies. The sheep cannot protect themselves against these enemies. And if the shepherd is not a good shepherd, like Jesus; if he should neglect to take proper care of his sheep, they will often be in danger of being injured or destroyed by their enemies. And sometimes they are exposed to this danger, even when they have good shepherds.

You remember how it was with David when he was a shepherd boy, and had charge of his father's flocks in the fields and forests of Bethlehem. There came one day a lion, and another day a bear, and each seized a lamb from the flock, and ran away with it. David was a good shepherd. He could not bear to see one of his lambs exposed to danger without doing all in his power for its protection. So he ran boldly after the wild beasts. He fought with them, and slew them, and brought his lambs back in safety to the fold.

And Jesus might well be spoken of as a shepherd, because he is very careful to protect his sheep. He has many ways of doing this. Let us take one or two illustrations to show how he does it.

"Protection Through Prayer." If a shepherd hears one of his lambs bleating piteously, he knows that something is the matter, and hastens to see what it is. But the voice of prayer is to Jesus like the bleating of one of his lambs, and when he hears it, he is always ready to do what is needed for their help and protection.

In a village in Germany, a poor widow was once lying sick in bed, when suddenly and unexpectedly a party of soldiers came into her room. They said they had been sent to stay at her house, and, in a rude, violent way, they demanded bread, and meat, and beer.

Trembling with fear, the poor woman said that she had not bread enough in the house for herself and her little ones to eat, and that for her to feed them was impossible.

This made the men very angry. They began to break and smash things to pieces. They swore at her terribly, and even threatened to beat her, unless she gave them what they wanted at once.

Just then, a little boy, about four years old, who had run into a corner to hide himself, in terror, when the soldiers first entered the house, came out from his hiding place. He kneeled down by his mother's bed, and clasping his little hands together, while the tears were rolling down his cheeks, offered this simple, touching prayer:—"O, dear, kind Jesus, please don't let them hurt mother! make them good to her, and bless them. Amen."

One of the soldiers who had a little boy at home, of about the same age, was very much moved by this dear child's prayer. It brought the tears to his eyes, and in a low voice he said:—"Comrades, let's go somewhere else. In a house where a pious child like this lives, God himself must dwell. This is no place for us. Let's go."

They did go; but before going, the soldier put two pieces of money in the hand of the child. Here we see how "the Good Shepherd" protects his sheep.

"A Child's Perservation." A little boy named George was sent by his mother on an errand to a neighboring village. On his way there, he was overtaken by a thunderstorm. When it began to rain, he looked around for shelter, and seeing a great hollow tree by the roadside, he

crept into it, and so was sheltered nicely from the pelting storm.

After awhile he heard a voice in quick, hurried tones, calling,—"George, George, come out there directly!" He thought it was his mother's voice. He had been taught to obey at once. And so, though the storm was still raging, he hastened from his hiding-place. He had no sooner done so, than there came a bright flash of lightning. It struck the tree in which George had been hiding, and rent it in splinters to the ground.

Now, if George had not heard that voice calling him just at that moment, or if he had not obeyed at once, what he thought was his mother's call, he would have been killed on the spot.

George was a good, pious boy, one of the lambs of Jesus. And when he saw how wonderfully his life had been preserved, he kneeled down there in the midst of the rain to thank the good shepherd for protecting him.

And though it turned out that the voice he heard was not *his* mother's voice, and was not spoken to him; it was the voice of another mother, in a cottage near by, calling *her* son George, to come out from a neighboring thicket;

yet that only made it more wonderful still. For God made use of a voice that was calling to another and protected him from danger in that way. If God had sent an angel from heaven to call George out from that tree, it would not have been at all more wonderful than that he should have made use of the voice of that strange woman to do it.

If a shepherd finds that in the field where his sheep are put to pasture there are some dangerous places, where the sheep may get astray, or fall over a precipice and be wounded or killed, he builds fences round those places. And those fences are intended for the protection of the sheep. If the sheep do not mind the fences, or jump over them, the wolf may catch them and devour them, or they may suffer harm in some other way.

"Keep Away From the Wheels." Little Charley Williams lived near a mill. He was very fond of going among the workmen and the young people employed there. The foreman of the mill had often said to him,—"Charley, my boy, be sure and *keep away from the wheels.*"

For awhile, he minded these important words. But, by and by, he grew careless about them,

and thought he could go where he pleased without danger. One day he was walking through the mill, and not minding what he was doing. He went too near the wheels. The band caught his little coat, and drew him into the wheels; and before the men could stop the machinery and take him out, several of his limbs were broken; and though he was not killed, he was dreadfully mangled and hurt, and felt the effect of his carelessness all his life.

Now, the commands and directions which we have in the Bible, are the fences which Jesus, the good shepherd puts around his sheep to keep them from harm. If we mind them, we shall find protection in them. If we forget them, or neglect them, we shall surely run into danger.

The third thing that the shepherd does for his sheep is, that he protects them.

*There is only one thing more of which I would speak that the shepherd does for his sheep, and, this is—he—*SAVES*—them.*

During the summer time, the shepherd in the lands of the Bible used to lead his sheep about over the hills and the mountains wherever he could find pasture for them. And when the winter came, he would lead them home, and put them in the fold he had prepared for them.

There they would be sheltered from the cold and the storms; they would be safe from all danger, and have everything they needed to make them comfortable.

And this is what Jesus, our shepherd, is doing for his sheep. When he was here on earth, he said to his disciples, "I go to *prepare a place for you.*" John xiv: 3. That place is the heavenly fold which he is preparing for all the sheep and lambs of his flock. And all that he does for his sheep in this world is done in order that he may bring them to this fold at last. For this, he seeks them when they are lost. For this, he feeds them and takes care of them. And for this, he protects them when they are in danger. Salvation, or being saved, means being brought to this heavenly fold. And Jesus is called our Saviour, because he brings all his people at last to that blessed place. To have the soul saved, is the greatest blessing that we can ask, or that God can give. When the life of the body is in danger, men will give all they have in the world to save that life. But when the life of the soul is in danger, to save *that* life, is a blessing unspeakably greater.

"Saved." You remember that fearful shipwreck of the steamer *Atlantic*, which took place

some years ago on the coast of Halifax. Hundreds of lives were lost, and dreadful scenes were witnessed on that occasion. Among the passengers on board that steamer, was a merchant from Boston, who was a Christian man. When his family heard of the wreck, they were in great distress. How anxiously they waited to hear from him! How eagerly they examined the newspapers, and read over the list of the lost to see if his name was among them! But God ordered it so that this gentleman was permitted to get safe to shore. As soon as he could reach the telegraph office, he sent a telegram home to his family. There was but a single word in that telegram; but, O, it was worth more to his distressed family than all the world. It was the word—*Saved.* And when that merchant returned home, he had that telegram framed, and hung up in his office with that important word—*Saved*—in it, so that he might see it every day, and be reminded of God's great goodness in sparing his life. Yet it was only that merchant's *body* that was saved then. And this is nothing compared to the soul. But when we become the sheep of Jesus, the good shepherd, he engages to save our souls in heaven forever.

It does not cost a shepherd much trouble to save his sheep by preparing a fold for them; but, O, it cost Jesus, our shepherd, more than we shall ever know, to prepare that heavenly fold for us! Jesus said himself, "the Good Shepherd *giveth his life for the sheep.*" Here is a good illustration of the way in which he did this:

"One Died For All." One of our large ocean steamers left Liverpool sometime ago for New York. For a number of days the weather had been fine, and she was making good progress towards the end of her voyage. The passengers were gathered on the deck in little groups, talking about the old country they were leaving behind, and the new country to which they were going; when, suddenly, they were startled by a loud explosion, and volumes of blinding steam came rushing up from the hold of the vessel.

The wildest confusion followed. The women shrieked; the children screamed, and the men rushed wildly about trying to find out the cause of the explosion. It was a heart-rending scene. In the midst of all, the engineer came forward, looking as pale as a corpse. He said that one of the main-pipes had burst, and, that unless somebody went below, at the risk of his own

life, and turned a stopper in connection with that pipe, in a few moments they would all be blown up.

Then the screams and cries and confusion became worse than before. People rushed to the bows and the stern of the vessel so as to get as far away as possible from the explosion. Moments seemed like hours then. Again the engineer cried out those terrible words, telling the people that unless someone would risk his life to turn off that stopper, they must all be lost.

And here I must say that I think this engineer was very much to blame. What business had he to stand there, telling the people about the danger they were in, and calling for some one else to go and do what it was *his* duty to attend to? He ought to have rushed in, at once, himself, and have tried to remove the difficulty, or have died in the attempt. If I had been the owner of that steamer, I should have dismissed that engineer as soon as I had heard of his cowardly conduct. Shame on such a man! The danger threatening might have come upon them; many lives might have been lost, and the vessel sunk before he would risk his precious life.

But it was not so with all. One of the firemen—a man of whom no one on board knew

much—stepped forward, and offered himself for the dangerous duty. Seizing a large piece of canvas, he wrapped it quickly round him, and hastened down below. In a moment all was still. People held their breath with fear. Presently the sound of the escaping steam was hushed. Then the engineer and two volunteers went down to the engine-room. They saw the thing had been done on which the safety of the vessel and of all on board depended; and there, close by, they saw that brave and noble-hearted fireman; but he saw not them. His life was the sacrifice of the manly and generous act he had performed. The escaping steam had scalded him to death. The crew and passengers on board the steamer were saved by that brave man; but *he laid down his own life, that he might save theirs.*

And this illustrates the way in which Jesus, the good shepherd, saves his sheep. But, after all, cases like this illustrate the love of Jesus only in an imperfect way. His love in being willing to die for us was so wonderful that nothing quite like it was ever known. That brave fireman knew that he would have had to die in any case. If he had not nobly stepped forward as he did, to turn aside the danger that

threatened them all alike, then he must have died with his companions. It was braver and better, therefore, that he should die *for* them, as he did, in making the effort to save them, than that he should have died *with* them, having never made that effort. But it was different with Jesus when he undertook to save us. He need not have suffered or died at all, unless he had chosen to do so.

And then, it was not *certain* beforehand that the fireman would die in doing what he undertook to do. There was a *bare possibility* that he might be able to turn aside the threatened danger, and yet not be killed himself. But it was different with Jesus. When he came into the world to save us, he knew that he could do this *only* by dying for us himself. There was no possibility of his doing this in any other way. This was the price he had to pay. It was not possible even for the Son of God to save us in any other way.

And then it was for his friends, his companions and fellow-passengers that the brave fireman was willing to die. But it was different with Jesus. We were not his friends or companions. We did not love him, or know him, or care for him. No; but as the apostle says,

—"*when we were enemies*"—or "*ungodly*"—"Christ died for us." Rom. v: 6, 10. And Jesus may well be called the shepherd—"the Good Shepherd," because he saved his people—the sheep of his flock—by laying down his life for them.

And he makes use of his Word, the reading of it, the teaching of it, the preaching of it, and many other means, in order that his lost sheep may be brought back to him, may learn to know him, and to love him, and to be saved by him.

And now, if we look back over what has been said on this subject, we shall see that four reasons are given why it was foretold of Jesus that he was to be a shepherd to his people. He might well be called a shepherd, because *he seeks his people when lost*, as the shepherd does his sheep; because *he feeds them, and cares for them;* because *he protects them;* and because *he saves them.*

I will close this subject by quoting the lines of that sweet and simple hymn which speaks of Jesus as our shepherd:

"See, the kind shepherd, Jesus, stands
With all engaging charms;
Hark! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms.

"Permit me to approach, he cries,
Nor scorn their humble name;
For 'twas to save such souls as these
The Lord of glory came.

"He'll lead us to the heavenly streams
Where living waters flow,
And guide us to the fruitful fields
Where trees of knowledge grow.

"The feeblest lamb amidst the flock
Shall be its shepherd's care,
While folded in the Saviour's arms,
We're safe from every snare."

THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

THIS is one of the last prophecies in the Old Testament about our Saviour. Malachi iii: 1. We have spoken of a number of these, considering them as shadows that point us to Jesus. The promise to Adam and Eve of "the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head," was the first of these shadows. Noah's Ark was another. The promise to Abraham of the blessing of the world through his seed was another. Then we had Joseph as a shadow of Christ, and Moses in his character as a prophet. Then we spoke of the Jewish Tabernacle as one of these shadows. After this, we had Melchizedek in his priestly character; David and Solomon in their office as king; Jonah as a prophet and preacher; then we had Christ's own character represented as a shepherd; and now we finish these Old Testament

prophecies of Christ, by considering him as "the Messenger of the Covenant." I do not mean to say that we have spoken of all the prophecies that were given of our Lord before he came. It would have kept us a long time to go over them all. We have only taken a few of them. We have made a selection of some of the more interesting and important ones.

And now we come to consider what we are taught of the character and work of Christ when he is spoken of as

THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

A covenant means a bargain, or agreement made between two or more persons. One of these persons promises to do certain things, provided that the other will do certain other things. For example, we read in Genesis, twenty-ninth chapter, about Jacob going to live for awhile with his uncle, Laban, in Padanaram, where Abraham had formerly lived. Laban and Jacob made an agreement or covenant with each other. Jacob wished to marry Rachel, one of Laban's daughters. Laban said, "you shall have my daughter on these conditions: if you will serve me for seven years, as a shepherd, taking care of my flocks of sheep, then, as soon as the seven

years are ended, you shall marry Rachel, and have her for your wife."

Jacob agreed to this. *That* was the covenant, or bargain, they made about this matter.

The covenant about which so much is said in the Bible, and of which Jesus was to be "the Messenger," is called "the Covenant of Salvation," because it relates to the saving of our souls. The persons who made this covenant were God the Father and God the Son. This is what is meant by the prophet Zachariah, (Ch. vi: 13), when he says—"the counsel"—or covenant "of peace shall be between them both." Two persons are here spoken of as "them *both.*" This refers to God the Father, and his Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. They made this covenant between them. God the Father engaged to save and bless all those who should repent of their sins, and believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, provided that he—*i. e.*, Jesus Christ—would do certain things. The things that God required Jesus to do, were these: he was to be willing to come down from heaven and take our nature upon him; to be born as an infant, of a virgin mother. Though equal with God, he was to take upon him the form of a servant, and to become obedient unto death,

even the death of the cross. Phil. ii: 6-8. He was to obey God's law for us, because we could not obey it ourselves. He was to suffer and die in our stead, and so bear the punishment that we deserved for having broken God's law. Jesus agreed to do this. He said—"*Lo! I come to do thy will O God.*" Heb. vii: 9. This was what Jesus was doing all the time that he was here on earth. He was fulfilling his part of this covenant. And, at last, as he hung upon the cross, bearing such pain and anguish, as we cannot understand; while the sun hid his face; and darkness covered the earth; and the rocks were rending, and the graves were opening; when he uttered these words, just before he died,—"*It is finished;*"—*then*, he had done all that he promised to do. His part of the covenant was fulfilled. Then he died, and was buried. He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven. And there he sitteth at the right hand of God. As "the Messenger of the Covenant" he has "all power given unto him in heaven and on earth" to save all those who believe and obey him. When we send a messenger, all that he has to do is to deliver the message we give him. But it is different with Jesus. He came from heaven as God's messenger. He brought us that most

wonderful message—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He delivered that message. But *that* was not all he had to do. His work was not ended then. It is not ended yet. It never will be ended. As "the Messenger of the Covenant," he has everything to do for you, and for me, and for all his people. All that is necessary to be done for our support, and protection, and guidance, and instruction, and comfort, and blessing, and salvation, Jesus is "the Messenger of the Covenant" to do for us. We must look to him for everything. What a comfort it is to know this! And when we think of Jesus, our gracious Saviour as—"the Messenger of the Covenant," we may well ask this question—what sort of a messenger is he?

In trying to answer this question, we may speak of *five* things about him which show us that he is indeed a glorious messenger.

Well then, to begin with, we may say of Jesus, that he is—A SWIFT—*messenger.*

When a person is sent on a message, it is very important that he should not stop for anything by the way, but go straight on as quickly as possible, till the message is delivered. Suppose

a man is to be hanged at twelve o'clock to-morrow. The Governor of the State signs a pardon for him, and gives it to you and me to carry to the man. But instead of hastening as fast as we could, suppose we stopped to amuse ourselves on the way by calling to see a friend. We reach the end of our journey the next day, about an hour after the poor man has been executed. What a shameful thing that would be for us! We should be guilty of that man's death. It is very important for a messenger to be swift in his movements. And Jesus is a swift messenger. When speaking of the way in which he would attend to the prayers of his people, he says, "*It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*" Is. lxv: 24. This shows what a swift messenger he is.

We have a striking illustration of this promise in the case of the prophet Daniel. He knew that the time which God had set for his people to be in captivity, in Babylon, was nearly ended. He wished to know when God was going to deliver them from their captivity, and take them back to their own land; and so he set apart a day for special prayer to God in reference to this matter. He asked God to forgive his sins,

and the sins of his people, and to remember his promises to them, and take them back to their own land. And while he was still engaged in prayer, he felt some one touch him. He looked up, and there stood an angel. He told Daniel that as soon as he began to pray, God commanded him to come and answer his prayer. He was "caused to fly *swiftly*." He had come all the way from heaven to earth, while Daniel was praying, and before his prayer was ended, there was the angel Gabriel with the answer which he desired. Dan. ix: 20-23.

And we have another illustration in the New Testament. Jesus is hanging on the cross. The two thieves crucified with him are hanging at his side. One of them turns his eyes to Jesus, and says—"Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdom." We cannot tell what awful agonies Jesus was then enduring. It might have been supposed that in that terrible hour, when he was "making his soul an offering for sin;" and God was "laying on him the iniquities of us all," he was too much taken up with his own sufferings to listen to the prayer of the poor sufferer at his side. But it was not so. He was "the Messenger of the Covenant," as he hung upon the cross. And even then, he

was a *swift* messenger. Forgetting all about himself, and his own sufferings, he was ready, at once, to help and comfort the poor, penitent sinner who called upon him. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke xxiii: 43. "While he was yet speaking," the dying thief was heard and answered.

And Jesus often proves himself a swift messenger now, to answer the prayers of those who call on him.

There was a poor old widow woman who earned a scanty living by selling rags. She was a good Christian woman, strictly honest, as every true Christian will be, and she used to put by her pennies to pay her rent, before taking any of them for her own use. She became known to a lady in the neighborhood, who was kind to her, and often sent her a little help.

One evening this lady came home after being out on business through the day. She was kneeling down to thank God for taking care of her through the day, and asking him to show her what she could do to prove her love to him. All at once the thought came into her mind as plainly as though she had heard a voice saying,

"Go, at once, and take some candles to poor Sarah."

She did not mind it at first. It seemed strange to think of taking *candles*. Surely, she thought, bread, and butter, and tea, would be better than candles. But still the thought seemed pressed upon her so strangely and strongly, that she put some candles in a basket with a few other things, and went to the garret where old Sarah lived. It was so dark that nothing could be clearly seen. As she opened the door and went in, the old woman was just rising from her knees. She was surprised to find her kind friend there, and exclaimed, "Why, ma'am, what can have brought you here at this time?"

"Tell me, first of all, Sarah," said the lady, "what have you been praying for?"

"Why, ma'am, you'll think it very odd, but I was asking God to send me a candle; for my neighbor has lent me a large print Bible, just what I wanted so much; but I cannot see to read it without a light; so I thought it must be according to the will of God that I should read his holy book."

Tears came into the lady's eyes, for she felt that her heavenly Father had been pleased to use her as his messenger, and she handed the

candles to Sarah saying,—"God has sent these to you."

The old woman wept, too, and they both lifted up their hearts in wondering thankfulness to that gracious Saviour who delights to do for his praying children, "exceeding abundantly above all they can ask, or think." Here was another illustration of the promise, "while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

And when we think of Jesus as "the Messenger of the Covenant," cases like these show us how truly we may say of him, that he is—A SWIFT—messenger.

In the second place, we may say of Jesus, that he is—A LOVING—*messenger.*

Sometimes persons who are sent as messengers are very rude. They tell us what they were sent to tell, but they do it in such a rough way as to hurt our feelings, and cause us to shed bitter tears. But Jesus was not to be such a messenger. What a kind and loving messenger he was to be was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before he came into our world. He said of him:—"He shall not cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." This means that he was not to speak in a loud, rough manner. Then the prophet goes on to

Jesus Thrust from the Synagogue

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land. But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath. And rose up, and thrust him out of the city.—*St. Luke iv: 16–18, 20, 24–29.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Drawings for the interior here represented were taken from the synagogue of the Sephardim Jews, the oldest in Jerusalem. It shows the characteristic features of such places of worship; the central rostrum, occupied by the elders and the ruler of the synagogue, and from the front of which the lessons for the day, with their Midrash or commentary, are read—the ruler's permission being granted—by anyone who may intimate a wish to officiate in this capacity. The latticed gallery conceals from view the women of the congregation.

say, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Is. xlii: 2, 3. This means that he was to be very gentle and loving in all that he did and said. And just such a messenger he was. As the people listened to his preaching, we are told that they—"all—wondered at the *gracious* words that proceeded out of his mouth." Luke iv: 22.

Let us take an example or two of the loving way in which Jesus delivered his messages, "when he was seen among men." One day as he was going by the city of Nain, he met a funeral procession coming out of the city. The dead man "was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." What deep sorrow was filling the bosom of that poor woman! The son, now dead, had been the sunshine of her home—the joy of her life—the prop on which she had leaned. Her heart was almost broken. A great company of her friends was with her, to show their sympathy in her grief. And when Jesus saw her, he pitied her, too. Very tenderly he said to her,—"*Weep not.*" He did not mean to reprove her for weeping. It is right to weep when those we love are taken away from us. Our Saviour taught us this by his own example. As he stood by the grave of his friend Lazarus,

and saw his sisters weeping, and the Jews also weeping that were with them, we read these two touching words—"*Jesus wept.*" The reason why he told this poor sorrowing widow not to weep, was, that he was going to take away the cause of her sorrow. Then he spoke to the dead young man, and called him back to life, and gave him to his wondering and now rejoicing mother. Here we see what a *loving* messenger he was.

And then we have an incident in the life of the apostle Peter, which gives us another illustration of this same feature of his character.

You remember in that last sad night of our Saviour's life on earth, before his crucifixion, how Peter denied him three times, and swore, with oaths and curses, that he did not know him. It might have been supposed, after this, that when he rose from the dead, Jesus would not have cared to meet Peter; and that when he did meet him, he would have reproved him sharply for his unfaithfulness; but it was not so. On the contrary, when that glad Easter morning came, we are told that as the angels at the sepulchre met the good women who were the first to come there, they told them the glad tidings that Jesus had risen from the dead.

And then they sent them with a message, saying—"Go, tell his disciples, and *Peter.*" The angels did not do this of themselves. It was Jesus who had told them to do it. "Go tell his disciples, and *Peter.*" Peter was the only one mentioned by name—the only one to whom a particular message was sent. We may well ask the question here—why was this? It was because of the loving character of the messenger of the covenant. Jesus knew how sorry Peter felt for what he had done. He knew how bitterly he had wept over his sin; and so he sent this message to comfort him. When Peter received this message, it would be a proof to him that the master whom he had three times denied, was ready to forgive him.

And the apostle Paul tells us more about this matter. We learn from him that on the morning of the resurrection, *Peter saw Jesus before the rest of the disciples.* St. Paul says, "He was seen of Cephas." I. Cor. xv: 5. It seems from this, that Jesus arranged things in such a way that Peter should have a private meeting with him, all alone by himself. We have no particular account of such a meeting given us in the gospels. But it is clear from what St. Paul says in the passage above referred to, that our Saviour

did give Peter such a meeting. How kind and loving it was in him to do it! He knew how badly Peter was feeling for having denied him. He knew how painful it would be to him to have this matter talked over in the presence of the other disciples; and so *he kindly met Peter all by himself.* We can imagine how Peter would throw himself at his Master's feet; what bitter tears he would shed while confessing his sin, and asking to be forgiven! And we can imagine, too, how tenderly Jesus would speak to him, and tell him that he freely forgave him, and received him back into his place as one of the disciples. And after this, when Peter met Jesus in the company of the other disciples, he would feel comforted, because he knew that the gracious Saviour whom he had treated so shamefully had pardoned him and taken him into his favor again. This shows us what a *loving* "Messenger of the Covenant" Jesus is!

And the great message which Jesus brings to us all is—that *God loves us.* The Bible was written to be the proof of this love; and our duty as Christians is to try and make men know this.

"I was leaving a gentleman's house where I had been paying a visit," said a minister of the

gospel, when I put this question to the servant-maid who was about to open the door:

"'My friend, do *you* love God?'

"'I am afraid not,' she answered, 'and I fear I never shall.'

"'Well,' I said, 'you may at least depend on this—it is *certain* that God loves *you*.'

"'How can you possibly tell *that?*' asked the master of the house, who was going down stairs with me. 'This is the first time you have ever seen this woman, you know nothing about her character. You cannot tell whether she attends to her duties properly or not.'

"'Never mind about that,' I said. 'It is certain that God loves her, and *you*, too. I am quite sure of this, because God has told us that his love to us does not depend on what we are, or what we deserve. The Bible tells us "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son" to die for it; and again it tells us, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to die for our sins!"' I. John iv: 10.

"'If that is so,' said the gentleman, 'and your words seem to prove it, what a shame it is that I don't love him. May I say to myself without any fear of making a mistake, "It is *certain* that God loves me?"'

"'Indeed you may,' I said; 'and I pray to God you may soon be able to say "It is certain that I love him."'"

And Jesus may well be called a loving messenger, because he came into the world not only to tell us this great truth, but also to be himself the proof of it.

But in the third place, Jesus is—AN EVER-PRESENT —*messenger.*

A messenger can be of no use in any place where he is not present. And an earthly messenger can never be present in more than one place at a time. But Jesus, the messenger of the covenant is *always* present in *every* place. David felt this when he said:—"From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Ps. lxi: 2. It would have been no use for David, "from the ends of the earth" to cry unto one who was not there to hear his cry. But Jesus is present everywhere.

What a good illustration we have of this in the case of Jonah! When he was in the belly of "the great fish" that swallowed him, he was carried down to the bottom of the sea. What a far off, lonely place that was to be in! In speaking of it himself, he said:—"The floods

compassed me about. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the weeds were wrapped about my head; the earth with her bars was about me forever." Jonah ii: 3-6. What a strange place that was in which to pray! Jonah called it "the belly of hell." Yet from that deep, dark, lonely place Jonah prayed unto God. His prayer was heard and answered, and he was brought back in safety to the light, and to the land again.

Jesus the ever-present messenger was there to help him when he cried. And so he is present in every place to hear and answer us when we call upon him.

Here is an illustration from the experience of a sea captain. "Once, when I was crossing the Atlantic," said he, "it had been my watch on deck till midnight. Then the first-mate took my place, and I went down into the cabin to sleep for four hours. I told the mate the direction in which the vessel was to be steered. While I was undressing to turn into my berth, the thought came into my mind that I ought to change the ship's course one point." The mariner's compass, you know, has a circle drawn around it which is divided up into a great many points. "The vessel was heading to the

northeast. The thought that came into my mind was to change her course to one point south of northeast. But I could see no reason for the change, for I knew that northeast was the right course to reach the port for which we were sailing. So I turned into my berth and tried to go to sleep. But I could not sleep. Something seemed to be saying to me, in a strange way—'Change the vessel's course one point.' I tried to put the thought away, but it was impossible. At last I rose and went on deck, and ordered the man who was steering, to change the vessel's course one point. Then I went to bed and slept till morning. The next day we saw a vessel in the distance with a signal of distress flying. We made sail for her. On coming up to her, we found she had sprung a leak, and was in a sinking condition. We saved the whole ship's company. Soon after a severe gale arose in which the ship went down, and all on board would have perished if they had not been taken off. I did not understand, the night before, what I was changing my ship's course for; but now, the meaning of it was plain enough." This was the captain's story.

And here is the explanation of it. The captain of that sinking ship was not a Christian; but he

had a Christian wife at home. There, hundreds of miles away, she was praying for the safety of her husband. Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, was present with her, and heard her prayers. He was present with her husband on that sinking ship. He saw the danger he was in. He was present with the captain of the other ship in his cabin. He put into his mind the thought which seemed so strange to him—"change the ship's course one point." In this way, the prayer of that Christian wife was heard, and her husband and his crew were saved from death. Jesus is an ever-present messenger.

In the fourth place, Jesus is—AN ABLE—*messenger.*

The messengers that we employ have very little power. They may be able to carry the message that we send by them, but that is all. In carrying our message, they may meet with many difficulties which they have no power to overcome. But Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, is able to overcome every difficulty in his way. He has "all power in heaven and on earth given unto him," and he makes use of that power to help, and comfort, and save, and bless his people. Just think for a moment, of some of the things which the Bible tells us that

he is able to do. "He is *able* of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. iii: 9.

"He is *able* to save unto the uttermost, them that come unto God through him." Heb. vii: 25. "What he has promised, he is *able* to perform." Rom. iv: 21. He is "*able* to make all grace abound to us, that we may abound in every good work." II. Cor. ix: 8. He is "*able* to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified." Acts xx: 32. He is "*able* to keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy." Jude xxiv. He is "*able* to succor them that are tempted." Heb. ii: 18. He is "*able* to make" his people "stand." Rom. xiv: 4. He is "*able* to save or destroy." James iv: 12. He is "*able* to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephes. iii: 20. This last is a most wonderful statement. Jesus is able to do not only *some* things that we ask, but *all* that we ask; he is able to do *above* all that we ask; he is able to do *abundantly* above all that we ask; he is able to do *exceeding* abundantly above all that we ask. And then, as if this were not enough, the apostle tells us that Jesus is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we *think*," as well as above all that we

ask. What a blessing to have such a messenger as our friend!

We have a striking illustration of the ability of Jesus to help his people in what took place on the Sea of Galilee, while he was here in our world. He was crossing that sea one day with his disciples. Being weary with his many labors, he lay down in the hinder part of the ship and fell fast asleep. While he was sleeping, a violent storm burst upon the sea. The wind howled, the foaming waves roared in their fury. The vessel was tossed about like a plaything, and was in danger of sinking. In their alarm, the disciples came to Jesus and awoke him, saying, "Master, save us, or we shall perish." Jesus arose. He went calmly to the side of the vessel, and spoke to the winds and the waves, saying—"Peace! Be still." They heard him. They knew him as their Lord and Master. They obeyed him; "and *immediately the wind ceased; and there was a great calm.*"

Let us take just one illustration from our times of the ability of Jesus to help and to save.

We may call it—"The Prisoner of Glatz." In a valley called the Glatzer valley, among the mountains of Prussia, there is a very strong castle, or fortress, which is used as a prison for

persons of rank who commit any offence against the king or the government of the country. It is in a very wild and lonely place. The walls of the castle are very thick. The windows have strong iron gratings in them. The rooms in the castle are small and gloomy.

Some years ago, in the early part of this century, Colonel T., an officer in the Prussian army had committed some great offences against the government, and had even gone so far as to try to take the life of the king. For these things, he was sent to that gloomy castle to be a prisoner there for life. He was confined in a solitary cell, and none of his family or friends were ever allowed to visit him. He had been there several years at the time to which our story refers. Lonely, and gloomy, and sad, was his life. He had no comfort in this world, and no hope for the world to come. He was not a Christian, and did not even believe the Bible. And so, while his body was a prisoner in that gloomy castle of Glatz, his soul was locked up in the still darker prison of unbelief and sin. The object of this story is to show how Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, was able to bring this poor man out of both these prisons at once.

Colonel T. was not allowed to have any book with him but the Bible. Sometimes he would open the book and read it awhile, because he had nothing else to do. But he hated the God of the Bible, and very soon he would close the book, and push it away from him in anger.

One winter's night a fearful storm was raging about that castle. The wind howled furiously around the battlements. The river that ran under the walls of the castle, rushed roaring by with greater violence than usual. The Colonel lay upon his couch, but could not sleep. A storm was raging in his own bosom, more terrible even than that which was sweeping by in such fury without. His whole life seemed to be rising up, and passing in review before him. He saw how fearfully he had sinned. He saw that *forsaking God* had been the cause of all his misery. He thought of his good mother, long since gone to heaven, and of the lessons she had taught him. For the first time in many years his heart was softened, and tears of penitence filled his eyes. He rose from his bed and took up that despised and neglected Bible. As he opened the book, in the dim light of the little lamp that stood upon his table, his eye

fell on the words written in Ps. 1: v, 15. "*Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*" Like a voice from heaven, these words went to the heart of the prisoner. He fell on his knees, and did—what he had not done before, since he was a child—*he prayed.* With strong crying and tears he asked for pardon and grace, for Jesus' sake. And the prayer which went up to heaven from that lonely, storm-swept prison in the Glatzer valley, was heard and answered. He found peace in believing.

And now let us pass from the prisoner in that gloomy castle, to the palace of the king of Prussia, in the city of Berlin. On that same night, the king lay sleepless on his royal bed. He was racked with terrible pains that drove sleep from his weary eyelids. In his suffering, he prayed earnestly that God would grant him at least one hour of comfortable sleep. His prayer was answered. And when he awoke, refreshed and strengthened in the morning, he said to the queen, his wife, "God has been so good to me, that I wish to do something to show my gratitude. Who, in all my kingdom, has most grievously offended me? Whoever it may be, I will pardon him."

The Miracles of Healing at Capernaum

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.—*St. Mark i: 21–27, 32–34.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Nothing, save weed grown ruins, marks the site of the once prosperous Capernaum, and the street in this picture, as well as other scenes laid in the same city, were therefore studied in Jaffa, also a seaport, and not otherwise dissimilar in situation.

"Colonel T.," said the queen, "who is a prisoner in the castle of Glatz."

"Right," replied the king, "he shall be released." Immediately a messenger was sent with a pardon to the prisoner of Glatz. It was the messenger of the king of Prussia who carried that pardon, but it was "the Messenger of the Covenant" who caused it to be sent. And when we see how Jesus released the body of that prisoner from the gloomy castle of Glatz, and how, at the same time, he released his soul from the gloomier prison in which sin and Satan had bound him, we may well say of him, that he is indeed an *able* messenger.

The last thing we have to say of him is, that he is—A FAITHFUL—*messenger.*

When we have a messenger engaged to attend to any business for us, it is a great comfort to us if we know that we can trust him with entire confidence. If he is one who always keeps his word, and always does what he engages to do, then we say that he is faithful, and we are not afraid to leave our business in his hands, whatever it may be. But there never was one so faithful as Jesus "the Messenger of the Covenant" is. Every word he speaks is true. Every promise he makes is sure. Heaven and earth

must pass away before the least part of one of his promises can fail.

When Jacob was going from his father's house on a visit to his uncle Laban, he slept one night out in the open field, at a place called Bethel. There he had that famous vision in which he saw the ladder reaching from heaven to earth, with the angels of God going up and down on it. God appeared to him in that vision, and told him that he would be with him in all his journey, and bring him back in safety to his father's house. And then he added this sweet promise,—"*I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*" Gen. xxviii: 15. This meant that God would never leave him till he brought him safe to heaven. And how was this promise fulfilled? A great many years after Jacob had that vision at Bethel, he lay upon his dying bed, a very old man. His family gathered around him to hear his last words. He told them how good God had been to him; and spoke of him as "the God who had fed him all his life long," and as "the Angel who had redeemed him from all evil." Gen. xlviii: 15, 16. The word angel here means the same thing as the word messenger in our text. Jesus, our glorious Saviour, was the "God who

fed Jacob all his life long;" and he was "the Angel," or messenger who had "redeemed him from all evil." And so, upon his dying bed Jacob told his family that the promise which God had given him at Bethel had been fulfilled. This was Jacob's testimony to the faithfulness of Jesus as "the Messenger of the Covenant."

And see how the apostle Paul felt about this. He said, "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" II. Tim. i: 12. St. Paul says—"that which I have committed unto him." This meant his soul. Suppose you have a precious jewel worth fifty or a hundred thousand dollars. It is so valuable that you are afraid you may lose it, or that some one may steal it from you. And suppose you have a friend who has a safe that is fire-proof and robber-proof. You take your jewel to this friend, and say to him:—"Please take charge of this jewel, and keep it for me in your fire-proof safe." He takes it and locks it up there. And now you feel comfortable about that jewel. You know your friend is faithful, and your jewel is safe. You do not worry about it any more. You are ready to say about your jewel

what St. Paul said about his soul, because you feel sure that it is safe.

And this is the way in which we should put our souls in a state of safety. We ought to commit them to Jesus to keep them for us, just as we would commit our jewel to a friend who was able to take care of it. And such a Friend we have in Jesus. He is "the Messenger of the Covenant," for this very purpose. "He *preserveth* the *souls* of his saints." Ps. xcvii: 10. And, in attending to all that the salvation of our souls requires, he is a faithful messenger. We may trust him without fear. When we have committed our souls to him, each of us may say, as St. Paul said:—"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

"Taking out the 'if.'" A working man's little girl attended a meeting one evening, and what she heard there, by God's blessing, led her to become a Christian. The minister preached that night, from these words:—"And behold there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Matt. viii: 2, 3.

In speaking about it afterwards, this little girl said:—"I noticed that there was an 'if' in what the man said to Jesus; but that in what Jesus said to the man, there was no 'if.' So I thought I would go home and take out the 'if.' I knelt down in my little room, and said, 'Lord, Jesus, Thou *canst*—Thou *wilt* save me, and make me clean; I give myself to thee.'"

Let us all follow the example of this little girl, and take out the "if," when we commit our souls to Jesus.

And when we think of Jesus as "the Messenger of the Covenant," let us remember that he is a *swift* messenger—a *loving* messenger—an *ever-present* messenger—an *able* messenger, and a *faithful* messenger.

THE FORERUNNER

TO persons who have been watching through a long, dark, stormy night nothing can be more interesting than a sight of the morning star. It tells them that night with its gloom and darkness is almost over, and that day with its brightness and beauty is near at hand.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was born about four hundred years after the death of the prophet Malachi, who wrote the last book of the Old Testament. During all those four hundred years the Jews had no prophets. God sent them no messages from heaven. It must have seemed to the pious Jews, during those years, as if God had forsaken them. And then their government was unsettled, and they had a great many troubles, as a nation, to pass through. These things made that period of their history a very trying one. We may well compare it to a long, dark night. It had,

indeed, been very long, and very dark. But when John the Baptist came, he was like the morning star on the dark sky of Israel's stormy history. And as when the morning star appears, we know that the day is coming, so when John appeared, it was a sure sign to the pious Jews that the Great Deliverer, the Messiah, of whom all their prophets had spoken, was near at hand.

We call John the Baptist the forerunner, because the angel said that he was to "go *before*" the coming Saviour "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke i: 17. You remember when Ahab, the king of Israel, rode in his chariot from Mount Carmel to Jezreel, how the prophet Elijah girded himself, and ran before him all the way. Then Elijah was the forerunner of Ahab. And in Eastern countries, the same custom is kept up at the present day. When a person of any importance rides in his carriage, you will generally see a young man running in front of the carriage, calling on people to get out of the way. This is a forerunner. And John was called "the forerunner of Christ," because he came to tell the people of his coming, and so "to prepare his way before him."

We have been occupied, thus far, in considering some of the things which were told us in the Old Testament about Christ *before* he came. And now, we are going to enter the New Testament, and speak of some of the things told us about him *after* he came. And so we begin this part of our subject by speaking of *John the Baptist—the Forerunner of Christ.*

And in speaking on this subject we may call attention to two things: *the first is—what the Bible tells us about John the Baptist; the second is, what we may learn from all that is thus told us;* or to make it shorter, we may speak about —the facts of John's history; and the lessons which these facts teach us; or to put it shorter still—*the facts and lessons of John's life.*

The facts of John's life, are the first thing we are to speak of.

Now it is a fact that *his coming into our world was foretold about seven hundred years before he came.* The prophet Isaiah was speaking of John the Baptist when he said—"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Is. xl: 3. We can see how John applied this passage to himself in John i: 23.

It is a fact that when the time arrived for John's coming into our world, the angel Gabriel was sent down from heaven to tell about it.

One day when Zacharias, who was to be the father of John the Baptist, was in the temple at Jerusalem burning incense, as a priest, on the golden altar, at the time of the daily sacrifice, an angel suddenly appeared, standing near him. Zacharias was afraid when he saw the angel. You and I would have felt so too. The best people in the world have felt afraid when they have seen angels. The reason is because we are sinful creatures. "Fear not, Zacharias," said the angel. Then he told him about the birth of a child, of whom he was to be the father. He told him that the name of the child was to be "called John." He told him that this child was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, of whom the prophet Isaiah had spoken so long before: and then he showed him what sort of a person this promised child was to be, and what he was to do.

We are not surprised to find that Zacharias could not believe all the wonderful things of which the angel had told him. Zacharias asked the angel to give him a sign that all he had said was true.

The angel said he should be dumb, and not able to speak, until what he had said should come to pass. And just so it was. Zacharias never spoke a word, from that moment, until the promised child was born. The Jews used to give names to their children when they circumcised them, on the eighth day after they were born. And when this little babe was circumcised, and the name John was given to him, the tongue of his father, Zacharias, was loosed again, and he broke out into a song of praise to God for all his mercies to him. We read about this in Luke i: 11-23, 59-79.

It is a fact that when John grew to be a boy he lived in the wilderness till he was thirty years old. We are not told anything about him during all these years. What he did, or how he spent his time we know not. We do not suppose that he spent his time in idleness. I have no doubt that the wilderness of Judea was God's school, or college, to John the Baptist, as the desert of Midian was to Moses, where for forty years he was studying the lessons that God wished him to learn.

It is a fact that when John was about thirty years of age he came out from the wilderness and began to preach. Luke iii: 3. He was

dressed very coarsely, and lived very plainly. A camel's hair garment, such as the Arabs in that country wear to-day, with a leathern girdle around his loins, was the dress in which John made his appearance as a preacher. He was to be a sort of second Elijah; as the angel said, to "go in the spirit and power of Elijah;" and so he was dressed like that stern prophet. II. Kings i: 8. And his food was as plain as his dress. "Locusts and wild honey" were to be his chief articles of food. Poor people in that land to-day live in the same way. They have locusts dried and prepared, as we prepare herring or other fish, and eat them with oil and honey.

It is a fact that John was a very popular preacher. We are told that people "from Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the region round about Jordan" went out to hear him. Matt. iii: 5. His preaching was very different from what the people had been accustomed to. They had never heard anything but dull, sleepy sermons, on subjects which they could not understand and did not feel much interest in.

But John had a new subject to preach about; and he preached about it in a way that was

entirely new. He told the people that the long promised Messiah was coming, and that they must get ready to meet him. He told them that the only way in which they could do this was by repenting of their sins, or being really sorry for them, and by turning away from them. He compared the Jewish people to a tree planted in a garden. He said that God had sent him to lay down the axe at the root of this tree; and that unless they minded what he said, or unless the tree which had long been barren began to bear fruit, it would be cut down and cast into the fire.

And then, there can be no doubt that John's *manner* of preaching was quite as startling as the *matter* of it was. We have no report handed down to us of the way in which he preached. But I have always thought it must have been very simple, very earnest, and very solemn preaching. I suppose he had a clear, loud voice; that his sermons were full of illustrations; that these were delivered with lively gestures, and that he made the wilderness ring again with his solemn warnings. And this being so, we are not surprised at the effects that followed from his preaching. *Great multitudes came, and were baptized by him.* This is one of the facts of his

life. John's baptism was different from Christian baptism. It was not something that would answer in place of Christian baptism. We know this is true, for we find the apostles baptizing over again persons which had already received John's baptism. Acts xix: 3-5. We know not what form of words John used when he baptized people. Certainly he did not use the sacred words employed in the Christian church—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Jewish teachers were in the habit of baptizing those who became their scholars. John came as a teacher from heaven. He had truths to teach that were new to the people, very important and solemn truths. And those who wished to become his disciples, and to learn these truths he received by the rite of baptism. And it was because he baptized so many people that the title he bears was applied to him, and he has always been known in the Christian church as—*John the Baptist.*

It is a fact that John's preaching had a great effect on the minds of the Jewish people. They were thinking and talking about the coming Messiah. And this feeling went so far, we are

The Parable of the Sower

And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.—*St. Mark iv: 1.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Such beauty as the Sea of Galilee may be said to possess is attributable, not to the physical features of the landscape, which are tame and uninteresting, nor even to its local coloring, but to the ever-varying play of atmospheric effects. Full daylight does not display Gennesaret to advantage, whereas pearly dawn and sunrise, the flush of sunset upon the bare hills of Bashan, and moonlight seen over the quivering waters of the lake, reveal scenes of loveliness which linger in the memory, and which owe their charm, partly it may be to association of ideas, but not a little at the same time to natural effect. The Lake of Gennesaret is six hundred and eighty-two feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

told, that men began to think that John himself must be the Messiah. Luke iii: 15. And here we see how faithfully John discharged his duty as the forerunner of Christ.

It is a fact that John kept on preaching after Christ came. It is a fact that he acknowledged him to be a person greatly superior to himself. John iii: 27-32. He directed the attention of men to him, as—"the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." John i: 29. It is a fact that John kept on bearing witness to Christ till Herod was offended at him, because he reproved him boldly for his sin. Luke iii: 19-20.

It is a fact that while he was in prison, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether *He* was the Christ, or whether they were still to look for some other person to come as the Messiah. Some people think that John only did this for the sake of his disciples. They suppose that John was expecting soon to die, and that he wanted to introduce his disciples to Jesus, that they might know him and follow him when their own master was dead. Others suppose that John had come to feel a little uncertain in his own mind on this subject, and that *this* was the reason why he sent his disciples

to Jesus. We cannot tell positively which of these was the true reason. And it does not matter much which it was. The important thing for us to notice is, the answer, which Jesus sent back to John. He did not say yes, or no, to John's question. But he told his disciples to go back, and tell their master what miracles he was performing, and how he was preaching the gospel to the poor. Matt. xi: 2-6. The miracles that Jesus spoke of were the very ones that the prophet Isaiah had said that the Messiah should perform when he came, as you will see, if you look at Is. xxix: 18, 35; iv: 5, and xlii: 7. The works that Jesus was doing were a more sure proof that he was the Messiah than any words that he could have sent back to John. Whether John was asking proof for himself, or for his disciples, *this* was the very best proof he could have.

And then it is a fact that not long after this John was beheaded in prison. Herod's wife was angry with John for what he had said to her husband about their marriage. She never forgave them for this; and when the opportunity came she took her revenge upon him by having his head taken off. How this was done we can see in Mark vi: 14-28.

These are the principal facts in the life of John the Baptist. And having considered these, we may go on to consider

THE LESSONS TAUGHT US BY THESE FACTS.

Now, if you wish to join in singing a tune, you must know what the key-note is, to which the tune has been set; if you wish to see all the beauty of a fine landscape, you must be careful to look at it from the right point. Such a life as that of John the Baptist is like a grand tune, or a beautiful landscape. What is the key-note of this tune? What is the right point of view from which to look at this landscape? We shall find the key-note of this tune—the point of view from which to look at this landscape, in what was said about John by the angel Gabriel, when he foretold his birth; and by our Saviour when he was speaking to his disciples concerning John. We find the angel's words in Luke i: 15. Here the angel is talking to Zacharias—the father of John. He tells him about his birth; and then he tells him what sort of a person he was to be. He says—"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine, nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb."

What our Saviour said of John we read in Matt. xi: 11. This was just after John's disciples had been to Jesus with the questions their master had sent them to ask. Jesus answered their questions; and after they were gone away, he talked with his disciples about John. And among the things he said of him, we read these words: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Here we find the angel saying that "he was to be great in the sight of the Lord;" while our Saviour said he was as great as anyone who had ever been born up to that time. We are to consider John the Baptist then as a *great man.* But there are two ways in which a person may be considered great. One of these is to be great in the sight of God.

In the sight of men some persons are considered great on account of their birth, because they happen to be born of parents who occupy important positions. Some are considered great on account of their wealth, because they happen to be rich. Some are called great because of the names and titles that are given to them.

Some are called great because they have fought bloody battles, and have gained what are termed splendid victories. And some are called great on account of the useful and important inventions and discoveries that they have made. These are some of the things that make people great in the sight of men. But, John the Baptist was not great in any of these ways. He was "*great in the sight of the Lord.*"

And the lessons we are taught by the history of John's life are easily learned when we come to see what the things were that made him great. We can see plainly *four* things that helped to make him great, and each of these teaches us a lesson.

Now when we think of John's greatness, the first lesson it teaches us is the lesson of—TEMPERANCE.

The angel Gabriel spoke particularly of this when he foretold the birth of John.

He said he should "drink neither wine, nor strong drink." John was temperate in what he ate, as well as in what he drank. And he was temperate in his dress too.

It is interesting to remember that the only other person, besides John the Baptist, whose birth was foretold by an angel—excepting our blessed Saviour—was Sampson. And the angel

foretold the same thing about Sampson that he did about John. He said that he was to be a temperance man too. He was to drink neither wine nor strong drink. Judges xiii: 5. Num. vi: 23. And here we see that two of the most famous men mentioned in the Bible—Sampson, famous for his strength, and John the Baptist famous for his greatness—were both temperance men. This shows us how much God approves of temperance principles and temperance men. The young people of this country, the girls as well as the boys, should make up their minds to be great in temperance, like John the Baptist. And the reason why they should do this is that *intemperance causes so much misery.* If we try to express in figures how much money is wasted by intemperance every year, we get so far up among the millions that we can form no clear idea of the sum. It is calculated that it costs more money than is paid for taxes by the whole country. And then more lives are destroyed by intemperance than by war, and famine, and pestilence all put together. It is estimated that sixty thousand persons are killed by intemperance every year. Think what a large army that would make! If we could see them marching slowly, and sadly by, knowing that they were

all going down in shame and dishonor to a drunkard's grave, what a sorrowful sight it would be!

We know that John the Baptist's temperance was one of the things that helped to make him a great man, eighteen hundred years ago. Now let us take an example of a man in our own day; one about whom we have all heard; and who owed much of his greatness to his temperance. One of the greatest men that ever belonged to our American navy was the late Admiral Farragut.

When he was only ten years old he was a cabin-boy on board the vessel that his father commanded in the United States Navy. He had learned to swear, and drink, and smoke, and play cards like an old sailor; and he thought that this was something manly and great. One day, after dinner, his father ordered everybody out of the cabin, but his son. Then he locked the door, and calling his boy to him, he said, "David, what do you mean to be when you grow up?"

"I mean to be a sailor," he replied.

"Yes," said his father, "a poor miserable, drunken sailor, before the mast; to be kicked and cuffed about the world, and die at last in a fever hospital in some foreign country."

"No, father," said the boy, straightening himself up proudly, "I'll tread the quarter deck and command one of my country's vessels as you do."

"No, David, you will not. No boy ever rose to the quarter deck, and to the command of a vessel with such principles and habits as you have. You'll have to change the whole course of your life, if you expect to become a good, or useful, or great man."

Then his father left him and went on deck. But he remained below to think over what his father had just said. "A poor, miserable, drunken sailor, before the mast kicked and cuffed about the world, and then to die in some fever hospital! Is *this* what I am to be? Never. I'll change my life, and change it at once. By the help of God, I'll never utter another oath; I'll never drink another drop of intoxicating liquor, and never gamble again." These resolutions were solemnly made, and faithfully kept from that hour. He afterwards became a Christian, and by the grace of God grew up to be the good, and great, and noble commander that he was.

One lesson taught us by the greatness of John the Baptist is the lesson of temperance.

The second lesson taught us by John's greatness is—the lesson of—HUMILITY.

Every thing about John shows how humble he was. When he was doing the work he had been sent to do, and was stirring all Jerusalem by his preaching, the rulers of the Jewish people sent messengers to him to inquire who he was; and we see his humility in the answer that he sent back to them. He might have said—"I am the forerunner of the Messiah; I am the messenger sent before his face; I am the prophet spoken of hundreds of years ago by Isaiah and Malachi. I am the one whose birth, and mission, the angel Gabriel was sent down from heaven to tell about." But it was nothing of this kind that John said of himself. How beautiful his humility appears when we hear him sending this word back:

"*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*" "I am only a voice—a little breath put in motion, that's all." Here was humility. And when Jesus came to him to be baptized, John said,—"I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Here was humility. When he was speaking of Christ, on one occasion to his disciples, he said he is one—"greater than I am—the latchet of whose shoes

I am not worthy to unloose." Here was humility. And when his disciples became jealous of the growing popularity of Jesus, and came to talk to John about it, he said to them plainly, —"He must increase, and *I must decrease.*" It was like comparing Jesus to the sun, and himself to the morning star, giving notice of the sun's rising and then saying "as the star melts away before the rising of the sun, so I must disappear as this glorious sun shines more and more." Here was humility. A beautiful example of humility John was! And this had much to do with his greatness.

Those who are great in the sight of man often have no humility at all. The Romans had many men among them who were considered great, and yet, in all the treasures of their language, they had no word to express what we mean by humility. And even the Greek language, which was considered richer than others, had no such word till the apostle Paul introduced it. It has well been said that—"humility is that low, sweet root from which all heavenly virtues grow." Solomon says of it—"*Before honor is humility.*" Prov. xv: 33. We see how true this was in the case of John the Baptist! He had the honor of being sent to prepare the way for

the Saviour of the world. He had the honor of being called "*great*" by that glorious Saviour. But we see how humility went before this honor. And it is so still.

Here is an illustration from our own times:

I suppose we have all heard about Dr. Morrison, the celebrated missionary to China. He found that the work in which he was engaged was too much for him. He needed some one to help him; so he wrote to his friends in England, and asked them to please send him out another missionary. When they got this letter they began at once to try and find a suitable young man to go out as a missionary to China and help Dr. Morrison.

After awhile, a young man from the country came and offered himself. He was an earnest Christian man, full of love to Jesus, and very anxious to be doing good. But he was poor. He had poor clothes on, and looked like a countryman, rough and unpolished. He came to the office of the Missionary Society, was introduced to the gentlemen of the Board, and had a long talk with them. They then asked him to call again in an hour or two, and they would give him an answer. In talking the matter over after he was gone, they came to the

conclusion that this young man would not do to go as a help to Dr. Morrison. Finally they said to Dr. Phillips, one of their members:—"Doctor, you see the young man, when he calls again, and tell him that we do not think him fit to be a missionary; but that if he would like to go out as servant to the missionary, we will send him." The doctor did not much like to do this; but he did it. He told the young man just what the Board said. Now, many a young man would have been angry on hearing this, and would have said:—"No, I shall do no such a thing. If I can't go out as a missionary, I won't go at all." But this young man did not feel or act so. After hearing what the doctor said, his answer was:—"Well, sir, if the gentlemen don't think me fit to be a missionary, I will go as a servant. I am willing to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water, or do anything to help on the cause of my heavenly Master." Here was humility indeed! He was sent out as a servant; but he soon got to be a missionary, and turned out to be the *Rev. Dr. Milne*, one of the best and greatest missionaries that ever went to any country.

The second lesson taught us by the greatness of John the Baptist, was a lesson of humility.

The third lesson taught us by John's greatness is the lesson of—OBEDIENCE.

The most important of all the lessons we have to learn in this life, is the lesson of obedience. It is a hard lesson to learn, but it is one we must learn if we wish to be happy, or good, or great. John had learned this lesson well, and he spent his life in practising it. He lived in the wilderness for thirty years, because God wished him to do so; and he obeyed God. Then God told him to go and preach about Jesus, and he obeyed. He cared nothing for his own case, or pleasure, for wealth, or labor, or praise. He only cared to obey God. He learned this lesson well, and practised it faithfully, and this made him great. And if we wish to be "great in the sight of the Lord," as John was, we must learn this lesson as he did. And if we do learn it properly, it will lead us to obey God, not only in some things, but in all things; not only in things that we like, and things that we understand all about, but also in things that we dislike, and things that we do not understand at all. Let us look at one or two illustrations of the kind of obedience God expects us to render him.

The Duke of Wellington once gave an order to one of his officers during a battle. It was a

difficult and dangerous thing that officer was commanded to do. He ventured to tell the Duke that he thought the thing he had been told to do was impossible. "Sir," said the Duke, "I did not ask your opinion about the order given you. I gave you the order that you might obey it. Go and do it."

This is the kind of obedience that God expects from us as his soldiers.

> "Ours not to reason why;
> Ours not to make reply;
> Ours but to do, or die."

When the owner of a ship sends his vessel out on a long voyage, he gives written directions, or orders, to the captain of the ship, about all that he is expected to do. These orders he is never allowed to depart from. No matter what happens, he must, as far as possible, carry out the orders he has received. The rule for captains to follow is,—"*Obey orders if you break owners.*"

Some years ago, when Stephen Girard—then the richest man in Philadelphia—was living, he owned a number of vessels. On one occasion, he sent a vessel to the East Indies. He gave the captain orders about how he was to sell his cargo, and about the kind of cargo he was to bring back.

Miraculous Draught of Fishes

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.—*St. Luke v: 1–7.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

The evidence of ancient monuments, and comparison of modern habits and customs with those incidentally recorded in the pages of Scripture, together with the proverbial conservatism and hatred of change which seems to be characteristic of all Eastern nations, warrant the assumption that the general features of daily life in Palestine have undergone little change since the days of Abraham; and the Levantine fishing-boat of to-day probably differs in no essential respect from those in which Jesus sat and talked, and in which he voyaged to and fro upon the Sea of Galilee.

On arriving at the port to which he was sent, the captain sold his cargo. Then he found that he could make more money for his owner by taking back a different cargo from what he had been told to bring. He did so. The result was that he made ten or twelve thousand dollars more by doing this than if he had obeyed the orders given to him. When he came to settle up for the voyage, in addition to his regular wages, Mr. Girard gave this captain a handsome sum of money, from the profits of the voyage; and *then dismissed him from the service.* When the captain expressed his surprise, Mr. Girard said,—"Sir, I can have no man in my employ who does not obey my orders. It happened to turn out very well in this case; but the next time disobedience might bring ruin." He would not take the man back into his service.

Here is another illustration from Mr. Girard's life. On one occasion, a poor man applied to him for work. "I am willing to do anything," said he, "to gain an honest living."

"You take that heap of stones at the end of this lot," said Mr. Girard, "and pile them up on the other side, in just the same way, and I will give you a dollar." The man did so, and received his dollar. The next morning he came again,

and was told by his strange employer to move the stones again, and put them where he had found them first. And so he went on every day, for a week, carrying the stones first here and then there, but never complaining nor asking any questions. On Saturday night, after Mr. Girard had settled with the man, he said, "I like you, my friend. There is no nonsense about you. You do just what you are told to do. Many men would have objected to doing the work over and over again. Now, you shall have work as long as I have any to give to any one."

This is the way in which God wants us to obey him. This was the way in which John the Baptist obeyed; and this was one of the things that helped to make him great. Let us learn this lesson as he did.

And then the fourth lesson that John's greatness teaches us, is the lesson of—COURAGE.

When he began his work as a preacher, he was not afraid of any one. He was not afraid of the common people, but told them plainly of their sins, and exhorted them to repentance. He was not afraid of the priests and Pharisees. He knew how wicked they were, and when he saw many of them coming to his baptism, he

reproved them boldly, and said,—"O, generation of vipers, who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?" He was not afraid of the great but wicked Herod, who was then the ruler of Judea. Herod liked John. We are told that—"when he heard him, he did many things" that John told the people to do, and "heard him gladly." Mark vi: 20. But, though Herod was kind to him, John was not afraid to speak to him, plainly and faithfully, about his sins. Herod had enticed away from his own brother Philip, Herodias, his wife, and had married her while her husband was still living. This was a dreadful sin. It was breaking the seventh commandment. John spoke to Herod on this subject, and told him, boldly, that it "was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife." Herod did not seem to mind it much. But it made Herodias very angry. She persuaded Herod to put John into prison. And, not satisfied with this, she never rested till she got an order from Herod to have him put to death. Herod's executioner came into the prison one day, with his sword in his hand, and "beheaded John in prison." The head of John was given to Salome, the daughter of Herodias. She brought it to her mother.

Such was the end of this great man. But while we mourn his sudden, and early, and cruel death, we cannot but admire his courage.

And the Bible teaches us that if we learn to love God, it will make us bold and courageous as John was. We shall be "bold as a lion." Prov. xxviii: 1. We shall be "as the goodly horse in the battle." Zech. x: 3. We shall be like a defenced city, with iron pillars, and brazen walls. Jer. i: 18. Our "faces will be like flint." Is. l: 7, and "like adamant," Ezek. iii: 9. We shall be "not ashamed." Rom. i: 16. We shall be "in nothing terrified." Phil. i: 28.

Here is an illustration of the way in which a boy may show this kind of courage:

A poor boy was attending school, with a large patch on the knee of his trowsers. One of his schoolfellows nick-named him "Old Patch," and tried to raise a laugh on him. "Why don't you fight him?" cried one of the boys. "I'd give it to him," said another. "Oh!" answered the brave boy, "you don't suppose I'm ashamed of my patch, do you? For my part, I'm thankful for a good mother, to keep me out of rags. I'm proud of that patch for my mother's sake."

That was the highest kind of courage. Many a man has courage enough to walk up to

the mouth of a cannon, who has not courage enough to bear to be laughed at.

And here is an illustration of true courage in a soldier:

One of the best generals of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, was General Von Zeiten. He was an earnest Christian man, and never was ashamed to own and honor his Saviour. On one occasion he declined an invitation to dine with the king, because it was the day for the communion at the church he attended, and he desired to be present there. King Frederick was an infidel, and the next time General Zeiten appeared at his palace, he tried to make a jest of the holy communion of the Lord's Supper, and the other guests laughed at the king's remarks.

Zeiten shook his gray head solemnly, stood up, respectfully saluted the king, and then, with a firm voice, said:

"Your majesty knows very well that in war I have never feared any danger, and often boldly risked my life for you and for my country. I am still animated by the same spirit; and to-day, if it were necessary, and your majesty commanded it, would willingly lay my gray head at your feet. But, there is one above us who is

greater than you and me—greater than all men. He is the Saviour and Redeemer, who died also for your majesty, and has bought us all with his precious blood. This Holy One I can never allow to be mocked, or insulted; for on him rest my faith, my comfort, and my hope, for this world and the world to come. It is in the power of this faith that your brave army has fought and conquered. If your majesty undermines this faith, you undermine, at the same time, the welfare of the State. I salute your majesty."

This noble confession of his Saviour by the old soldier, had a great effect upon the king. He felt that he had done wrong in trying to make a jest of the religion of his general and he was not ashamed to acknowledge it. He gave his right hand to the general, and placing his left hand on the old man's shoulder, he said with much feeling:

"O, happy Zeiten! how I wish I could believe as you do. I have the greatest respect for you. This shall never happen again."

This was true Christian courage, like that which helped to make John the Baptist great.

Thus we have spoken of four important lessons taught us by studying the greatness of

John the Baptist. We have before us the *lesson of temperance;* the *lesson of humility;* the *lesson of obedience;* and the *lesson of courage.* May God help us all to learn these lessons, and practise them, and then, like John the Baptist, we shall be "great in the sight of the Lord."

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

THERE is something very dismal about the darkness of night. And if you are sick, or suffering during the night, how slowly its hours pass away! and how long the night seems! And then, what a pleasant thing it is when the sun rises, and scatters his cheerful beams around! Then the birds begin to sing, and the flowers open their leaves, and unfold their loveliness, and everything seems bright and beautiful.

Before Jesus was born into our world the state of things here was compared to night. The prophet Isaiah was speaking of this, when he said,—"Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Is. lx: 2. And it was the effect of Christ's coming into our world that he was speaking of again, when he said,—"The people that *walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*"

Is. ix: 2. The birth of Christ was to be like the morning coming after a long, dark night. The prophet Malachi compares the coming of Christ to the rising of the sun. This is what he means when he says:—"Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings," or his beams. Mal. iv: 2. Christ's coming was like sunrise to the world.

The birth of Christ was the most important event that ever took place in the history of our world. This is the great event of which we are now to speak. And in speaking of it, there are four things connected with it to be considered. These are—*the time of his birth; the place of his birth; the circumstances of his birth; and the reasons for his birth.* Or to express it more briefly, *when—where—how*, and *why*—Christ was born.

We begin them by considering—WHEN *Christ was born.*

Any Sunday-schoolboy or girl can answer the question—When was Christ born? We reckon our years from the time when this great event took place. We all know what year it is that we are living in. We call this—the year 1913. And what we mean by this numbering of the years is, that Jesus was born into our world

nineteen hundred and thirteen years ago. Learned men who have examined this subject carefully, tell us that the birth of Christ really took place four years before this. They say that these four years ought to be added to these 1913. This would make it actually nineteen hundred and seventeen years since the birth of Christ. But we may well be content to let the figures stand as they are. We call this year, Anno Domini 1913. This means in the year of our Lord 1913. And every time we speak of the year in which we are living, we are, as it were, pointing back to the time of our Saviour's birth.

And what St. Luke tells us agrees with this. He informs us that John the Baptist began his ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar." Luke iii: 1. John was then thirty years old. This was our Saviour's age, too, for he and John were born in the same year, within six months of each other. The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar corresponds with the year 30, Anno Domini, or the thirtieth year of our present way of reckoning time. And Tiberius Cæsar began his reign when John and Jesus were about fifteen years old. And as twice fifteen make thirty, this

shows us that our present way of reckoning time from the birth of Christ is correct.

But some one may ask the question whether there was nothing said in the Old Testament about the time when Christ was to be born? Yes; there were two things said, and it may be well enough for us to take a look at them here:

One of these things about the time of Christ's birth was spoken of by the patriarch Jacob. The old man is on his death-bed. He gathers his sons round him, that he might, as we say, "tell them their fortunes," or let them know something about what would happen to them in the future. He begins with Reuben, the oldest, and goes on to Benjamin, the youngest. The most important of all the things he had to say, was when he came to speak of his son Judah. And the reason of this was, that Judah was the head, or father of the tribe from which Christ was to be born. In speaking of Judah, this was part of what he said:—"*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come.*" Gen. xlix: 10. A great many difficult questions have been raised upon this passage. We need not trouble ourselves about these. The real meaning of it is simple enough for any thoughtful young person

to understand. Shiloh here means the *peace-maker*. This refers to Christ. By the rod, or sceptre, here spoken of, in connection with Judah, and the law-giver, Jacob meant to say that Judah was to continue a distinct tribe, and be at the head of the nation until Christ came. And this was the case. But very shortly after our Saviour left the world, Jerusalem was destroyed. Judah ceased to be a distinct tribe, and lost its authority as the head of the nation. Unless then our Saviour had been born about the time that his birth did take place, the prophecy of Jacob would not have been fulfilled. But "*the Scripture cannot be broken.*" Jacob's prophecy *was* fulfilled. Christ, the Shiloh, *did* come while Judah was a distinct tribe, as indicated by the rod, or sceptre, and having the chief authority in the nation, as was denoted by its being the law-giver. And this was what Jacob taught us about the time when Christ was to be born.

And then there is another passage in the Old Testament which is very interesting on account of what it teaches us in reference to the time of Christ's birth. This is found in the book of Daniel. And the interesting thing about this passage is that it gives the date of Christ's

birth, and tells us *in figures* when he was to be born.

When Daniel lived, the Israelites were captives in Babylon. But Daniel found out by studying the Bible, and by prayer, that the time of their captivity was nearly ended. And he told his countrymen for their encouragement, that an order, or decree, would soon be issued by the authority of the king of Babylon, giving them permission to go back to their own country, and to build again the walls of Jerusalem. And then, to encourage them still more, he went on to tell about the coming of the great Messiah, of whom all the prophets had spoken. And one of the things which he told them concerning him, was the time when he would be born. In the ninth chapter of Daniel, and the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses, we read what the prophet said to them on this subject. These are his words:—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions, &c." This is Daniel's famous prophecy of the seventy weeks. Learned men have found great difficulties in explaining this prophecy, and have started many hard questions about it. We have nothing to do with these. All that we need

The Calling of Matthew

And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—*St. Luke v: 27–32.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

The receipt of customs, which odious occupation Matthew (Levi) quitted with alacrity at the summons of Jesus, doubtless refers to the customs duty levied at the gates of many European and Asiatic cities upon all food and goods brought in. The water-gate leading from the harbor is therefore selected for illustration. The customs duty was intensely distasteful to the Jews who regarded the tax as a badge of servitude to their Roman rulers.

trouble ourselves about is just to get the plain, simple meaning of the passage. And it is not hard to do this.

The decree, or commandment, for rebuilding Jerusalem, spoken of by Daniel here, is that of which we read in Ezra vii: 11. This was issued by King Ahasuerus. And Daniel said that within seventy weeks from that time, Christ, the Messiah, was to be born, and to live, and to die. Now, in the way in which the prophets used to speak of time, a day was counted for a year. And as there are seven days in a week, seventy weeks multiplied by seven would give four hundred and ninety days, or four hundred and ninety years, as the period of time of which Daniel was here speaking. And what Daniel here taught the people was, that within the period of four hundred and ninety years from the time when Ahasuerus should issue his decree for rebuilding Jerusalem, the birth, and the life, and the death of Christ would all take place.

Now let us look at these figures for a moment, and see how this sum works out. Get a reference Bible, and turn to Ezra vii: 11. Here we have the commandment, or decree, to which Daniel refers. At the head of the column of references in your Bible you will find that the

date of this decree was four hundred and fifty-seven years before Christ. This brings us to the time when Christ was to be born. It was to be four hundred and fifty-seven years after that decree went forth. At the time of his death our Saviour was thirty-three years old. Now add these two amounts together, four hundred and fifty-seven and thirty-three, and the result is four hundred and ninety. And so Daniel's figures do not lie. They tell the simple truth. Within the seventy weeks, or the four hundred and ninety years of which he spoke, from the time when Ahasuerus issued his decree for rebuilding Jerusalem, all the great events which he foretold came to pass. Messiah was born; Messiah lived; Messiah died, or was cut off. And so there are four ways in which we can tell when Christ was born. We can count back from the year in which we are living, and tell when this great event took place. We can take St. Luke's account of the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Jesus was thirty years old, and work out the date of his birth from that. We can go back to old Jacob's prophecy about Judah and Shiloh, and trace it out from that; or we can take Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, or the four

hundred and ninety years, and find out how exactly that points out to us *when* Christ was born.

The next point we are to speak of, is the place of his birth, or WHERE *Christ was born.*

Seven hundred years before he came into our world, the place where he was to be born had been distinctly foretold. The prophet Micah had said:—"And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth to me, that is to be ruler in Israel." Micah v: 2. This was the prophecy.

And see how it was fulfilled. About the time that Jesus was born, we read that "there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him?" Matt. ii: 1, 2. This led Herod to call "the chief priests and scribes of the people together, demanding of them *where Christ should be born.*" The answer they gave him was:—"In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet,"—Matt. ii: 5. And thus, to prove this, they quoted the prophecy of Micah, of which we have just spoken.

And how strangely it came to pass that Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, should have been at Bethlehem when the time came for him to be born. They had been living at the little town of Nazareth, in Galilee. This was far away from Bethlehem. They had no business and no relatives or friends to bring them to Bethlehem. But God put it into the heart of Augustus Cæsar, the Emperor of Rome, in his imperial palace, in that great city, to send forth a decree for enrolling, or making a census, of the inhabitants of Syria, as well as other parts of the Roman Empire. This rendered it necessary for every family to go up to the city of their fathers; and this brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem just in time for Jesus to be born there. If that decree had not been issued at all, or if it had been issued a month earlier, or a month later, there would have been nothing to call Joseph and Mary away from Nazareth at that precise time, and *Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem.* The Emperor of Rome little thought, when he issued that decree, that he was helping to fulfill a Jewish prophecy, written seven hundred years before, which foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. But in this strange way, God caused that prophecy

to be fulfilled. How wonderful this was! When we think about it, we may well say in the language of the hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

The town in which Christ was born was called "Bethlehem Ephratah," or "Bethlehem of Judea," to distinguish it from another town of the same name in the tribe of Zebulon.

The meaning of Bethlehem is "house of bread." This was a very appropriate name to be given to the birth-place of him who came down from heaven on purpose to be the bread of life to a hungry and perishing world. Bethlehem is situated about six miles south of Jerusalem. In itself, it has never been a place of much importance. The prophet Micah called it "a little place" in his day. And such it has always been. Its present population is not more than about three thousand. They are chiefly peasants who live by the cultivation of their fields or gardens. The appearance of the town as you approach is very beautiful. It is situated on a narrow ridge. The sides of this ridge are terraced down to the deep valleys that lie

beneath. These terraces are well cultivated, being covered with rows of olive trees, intermingled with vines and fig trees. They sweep in graceful curves round the hill like natural stairs.

We cannot help feeling an interest in Bethlehem, because of what we learn from the Old Testament of its connection with David. It was here that Jesse the father of David lived. Here David was born. It was in Bethlehem, and in the fields and forests around, that he kept his father's sheep when a boy. It was here he fought the lion and the bear that came to steal the lambs of his flock. And it was here that the prophet Samuel came, at the command of God, to anoint the ruddy-faced shepherd boy to be the future king of Israel. Here David lived till he left his sheep to become a soldier. And this is the reason why Bethlehem was called "the city of David."

But *Jesus* was born in Bethlehem; and *this* is what will give the place its greatest distinction forever. When we hear, or read of Bethlehem, the first thing that we think about is the stable in which the Saviour of the world was born, and the manger in which that child of wonders lay. And, of course, the first object of interest

to every one who visits Bethlehem, is that most sacred spot—the place of the Nativity. It was so with my companions and myself, when we arrived at Bethlehem.

We went directly to where, we are told, that stable once stood. Of course, there is no stable there now. Instead of this a large church, called "The Convent of the Nativity," covers the hallowed spot. This is an enormous building, said to have been erected by the Empress Helena, in the early part of the fourth century. It is therefore one of the oldest specimens of Christian architecture in the world. What is called the nave of this great church, that is the body of it, or the part that stands between the chancel rail and the chief entrance, in front of the church, is the portion of greatest interest. From this, we went down to an underground vault, over which, and on account of which, this vast church was built. Here, at the entrance of a long winding passage, cut out of the limestone rock, of which the hill of Bethlehem is composed, we found ourselves in a small irregular shaped chapel. This chapel is said to stand just where the stable stood in which Joseph and Mary found lodging on that memorable night. It is dimly lighted with silver lamps. There are

two small recesses in this chapel nearly opposite each other. In one of these recesses, on the north side, is a marble slab set in the floor. This slab has a silver star fastened on its surface. This star is said to mark that most sacred of all places—the place of the Nativity of the Son of God. Around this star, cut into the marble, are these words in Latin:—"*Hic de Virgine Maria, Jesus Christus Natus Est;* in English they are these:—"*Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.*"

I never can forget the strange and impressive thoughts and feelings that filled my mind and heart as I stood musing there. That spot marked the place, and the time, to which everything had looked forward since our world was made. And that spot marks the place, and the time, to which everything will look backward while our world shall last. It was very affecting to stand there and think of Jesus, the Son of God, seated now at the right hand of the Father in heaven, where "all the angels of God worship him," and then to think of the helpless little one born in that stable at Bethlehem. And it was very comforting then, and there, to take up the simple words of "The Little Child's Hymn for Night and Morning," and say:

"Once thou wert in cradle laid,
Baby bright in manger-shade,
With the oxen, and the cows,
And the lambs outside the house;
Now thou art above the sky;
Thou canst hear a baby cry."

We should be thankful that we know so well —the place where Christ was born.

And now we come to speak, in the third place, of the CIRCUMSTANCES *of the birth of Christ, or—* HOW—*he was born.*

And what this point of our subject will lead us to consider is *the contrasts* that attended the birth of Christ, or *the strangely opposite circumstances* that marked it. We have only time to look briefly at *three* of these.

There was a *strange neglect* on the one hand, attending our Saviour's birth; and yet, on the other hand, there was a *strange attention* marking it.

Here was taking place the birth of that great Deliverer, whose coming had been foretold from the beginning of the world. All the types and ceremonies of the Jewish religion had pointed to him. All their prophets had told about him. They had spoken plainly of the time *when* and the place *where* he was to be born. The Jewish teachers had been studying those prophecies all

their days, and teaching them to the people. And yet, they did not understand them themselves. They ought to have known that the time had come when Christ was to be born; but they did not know it. They ought to have had a committee of their best and wisest men sent down to Bethlehem, to be looking out for the birth of Christ, and to be ready to spread abroad the good news as soon as they knew that the birth of the promised Saviour had taken place. But they had no such committee there. They were not expecting the birth of Christ. No one was there to bid him welcome into the world he came to save. The chief priests and rulers of the Jews knew nothing about it when it took place. They paid no attention to it. Here was strange neglect.

But then, in contrast to this there was *strange attention* paid to the birth of Christ from other quarters. No committee of the Jews from Jerusalem was there to welcome him. But a committee of angels from heaven was there. In the fields near Bethlehem were shepherds—"keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shown round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said

unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." Luke ii: 8-14. Such a committee of angels never came from heaven to earth, before or since. And such a song of gladness as they sang was never heard from lips of men, or angels. Here we see what strange neglect of Christ's birth there was on the part of men, and what strange attention was given to it on the part of angels.

Now look at another of these strange contrasts that marked the birth of Christ. There was *strange poverty* attending it, and yet *strange riches*, too. There was strange poverty attending the birth of Christ. Joseph and Mary were very poor. The fact, that *a stable* was the only place they could find to lodge in, when they came to Bethlehem, was the best proof of this that could be given. It is said they went there, "*because there was no room for them in the inn.*" Luke ii: 7. No doubt this was so. But even if the inn,—(or the khan, or caravansary, the

public place appointed for strangers to lodge in) —was full, room might have been found for them somewhere else. If they had been rich people, travelling with chariots, and horses, and servants, no doubt, better quarters would have been found for them somewhere. But they were travelling alone. They probably had but one ass for Mary to ride on. We read of no servants attending them, and Joseph, no doubt, made the journey on foot. Everything about them showed that they were poor. They had no money to pay for lodgings; so no lodgings were offered them. Joseph and Mary belonged to the royal family of David. Their infant son was owner of all things. It was he whom the prophet represented as laying his hand on all the treasures of the globe, and saying,—"*The gold is mine, and the silver is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.*" Hag. ii: 8. And yet they were very poor. There was strange poverty here.

But then there was *strange wealth*, too. The visitors from heaven were not the only ones who came to show attention to this infant Saviour. Wise men from a far-off country in the East came, too. We shall have occasion to speak more particularly of them hereafter. But they supplied the want of which we are now

speaking. They brought wealth to this family who were burdened with poverty. These men brought presents to the infant King, whose birth they had come to honor. And one of the gifts they brought was gold. Matt. ii: 11. We are not told how much gold they brought. But these men were, no doubt, very wealthy. They would not have undertaken so long a journey, for such a purpose as this, unless they had been well off. They are even supposed by some to have been kings themselves; but we have no proof of this. Yet, when we know they were rich themselves, and that they came to visit one "who was born *a king*," we may well suppose that the amount of gold they would give, under such circumstances, must have been very considerable. No doubt there was enough of it to make a poor family, like Joseph's, feel quite rich. And so we may truly say that there was *strange poverty*, and *strange wealth* connected with the birth of Christ.

And then there was still another contrast connected with the birth of Christ. We see *a strange humiliation*, and *a strange glory* blending together in his birth.

It was a strange humiliation that the place of his birth should have been a little town like

Bethlehem, instead of in a famous, great city like Jerusalem. It was a strange humiliation that he should have been born in *a stable*, and not in some rich man's house or palace. It was a strange humiliation that the company into which he was introduced at his birth, were not the rich, and the great princes and nobles of the earth; but dumb animals—even the beasts of the stall. Well may we say, of his entrance into our world, as we do in the Collect for Advent Sunday, that—"He came to visit us in *great humility!*" And yet, what a strange contrast we see, when we look away from the humiliation of his birth, to the *great glory* that attended him even while he was lodged in the stable, and cradled in the manger! We see this glory in what the angels said about him to the shepherds of Bethlehem. They said that the birth of that child, who was born in such strange humility, should yet be the cause of "great joy to *all* people." They said that though a manger was his cradle, and his head was lying "low with the beasts of the stall"—yet he was "*a Saviour*, which is *Christ the Lord;*" Luke ii: 11; that his coming into the world, would bring "*peace on earth, and good will toward men;*" and at the same time would bring "*Glory*

Jesus Chooseth His Apostles—The Sermon on the Mount

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles. Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew. Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes. And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for your's is the kingdom of God. Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.—*St. Luke vi: 12–16, 20–23.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

A visit to the "Horns of Hattin" is convincing, if not of the accuracy of the tradition that this is the Mount of the Beatitudes, at least of the singular suitability of the place for the purpose it is said to have fulfilled. It lies at the head of the "Valley of Doves," a cleft in the hills which affords easy access to the summit from the neighboring cities on the borders of the sea. Capernaum is in sight, not far from the place where the Jordan enters the lake, winding from its sources at the foot of Hermon, whose snow-capped ridge is visible thirty miles distant on the northern horizon. A few miles nearer, the roofs of Bethsaida are seen amidst the refreshing greenery of surrounding gardens and palm trees, and Magdala is close at hand at the foot of the valley. The summit of the hill is a small plain a few acres in extent, with a rocky "horn" or rising ground at either end, whence the voice of a preacher would readily be audible to the multitudes congregated on the lower level.

to God in the highest;" glory to God in the *highest places;* glory to God among the *highest creatures,* and glory to God in the *highest measure.*

And when we think of these strange contrasts that attended the birth of Christ; the *neglect* on the one hand, and the *attention* on the other; the *poverty* on the one hand, and the *wealth* on the other; the *humiliation* on the one hand, and the *glory* on the other, we have clearly set before us the strangely opposite circumstances that marked his birth, or in other words we see HOW *Christ was born.*

There is one other thing for us to consider in connection with the birth of Christ; and this is the LESSONS *that it teaches us, or*—WHY—*he was born.*

There are *two lessons* taught us about *God's thoughts,* and *two lessons* about *God's feelings,* when we consider how Christ was born. The Bible tells us that "God's thoughts are not our thoughts," and we see this very clearly when we consider what the birth of Christ teaches us about God's thoughts. One thing we are thus taught, is—*How little God thinks of places!*

Men often speak and think as if the place in which we are born and in which we live was of very great importance. They think that we

cannot be great, or honorable, or good, unless we are born, or live, in some famous place. But when we remember that Jesus Christ—the greatest person who ever trod this earth—was born in *little* Bethlehem, and lived for the greater part of his life in a place so *despised* as Nazareth, then we are taught this lesson—how little God thinks of places! If we are not like Jesus; if we have nothing good or great in ourselves; then, no matter where we are born, or where we live, we can never be of much use in the world, and never have any real honor—"the honor that cometh from God." But, if we are like Jesus; if we have anything really great or good in ourselves; then, no matter how insignificant the place of our birth, or how poor and despised the place in which we live, still, like Jesus, we may be useful, and good, and great. And this is one of God's thoughts we are taught by the birth of Christ.

And then, *the other thought of God*, which the birth of Christ shows us, is—*how little he thinks of earthly riches!* Men think it is having what is called property,—houses and lands, and gold and silver, which makes people rich. But this is not God's thought about it. And God's thought is the right one. It is not property,—

that which we can only have for a little while, and which we cannot take with us when we die, that makes us rich; no, but it is *character*, —that which is truly our own—which death cannot take away from us, which will go with us into eternity, and be ours forever, it is only *this*, which can make us truly rich.

Here is an incident that shows us the folly of supposing that merely having gold and silver can really make us rich.

"Rich for a Moment." Sometime ago, the *Britannia*, an English man-of-war, was wrecked off the coast of Brazil. She had on board a large number of kegs filled with Spanish dollars. Some of them were brought on deck at the time of the wreck, in the hope that there might be an opportunity of saving them. But the vessel was going to pieces so fast, that it was soon seen the only hope of saving the lives of those on board was to leave everything behind, and get into the boats. The last boat was about to push off from the sinking wreck, when a young midshipman went back to see if any one was still on board. To his surprise there sat a sailor, who had broken open the heads of some of these kegs, and was heaping up the silver dollars all around him.

"What are you doing there?" shouted the midshipman. "Don't you know the vessel is going to pieces, and will sink in a few moments?"

"Let her go," said the foolish man. "I've lived a poor wretch all my life, and I'm determined to die rich."

This was acting like a madman. And yet how many people are doing the very same thing! This world is only like a sinking wreck. And those who spend all their time here in trying to get money, are following this example of the foolish sailor. How different it was with Jesus! When he was on earth he had neither houses nor land, neither gold nor silver. He was born in a stable. He said of himself,—"*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" Matt. viii: 20. When he sailed on the lake, it was in a *borrowed boat.* When he rode into Jerusalem, it was on a *borrowed ass.* Matt. xxi: 2, 3. When they called upon him to pay taxes, he *borrowed the money from a fish* to pay for himself and the apostle Peter. Matt. xvii: 24-27. And when he died, he was *buried in a borrowed tomb.* And yet, in the midst of all this poverty, Jesus was *the richest man that*

ever lived. He was rich, not only because he *really owned* everything in the world, but because he was rich in himself—rich in his own character—*rich in goodness and in grace.* In this way he is not only rich in himself, but is able to make others rich also. And this is what he means when he says,—"I counsel thee to buy of me *gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich.*" Rev. iii: 18. This means the grace of God, which Jesus has to give. There is nothing like grace to make us rich. It makes the soul rich for eternity. The richest king in the world is only a poor man if he be without this grace. The poorest beggar in the world is a rich man if he only have this grace. And so we may well say that the birth of Christ teaches us two lessons about the thoughts of God. It teaches us how little God thinks of places; and how little he thinks of earthly riches—of gold and silver.

And then there are *two lessons about God's feelings* that we are taught by the birth of Christ.

It teaches us—*how God feels towards sin.*

We have many illustrations of his feelings on this subject. See him sending his angel to drive Adam and Eve out of Paradise, as soon as they had sinned. See him cursing the ground

on account of sin, so that it should be barren and desolate, or bring forth thorns and thistles. Gen. iii: 17, 18. See him sending the waters of the deluge, and drowning the world for its wickedness. See him commanding the fiery storm to burst forth in its fury, and consume the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. See him sending earthquakes to rend the globe, and lightnings to blast it, and storms and tempests to waste it, and plagues and pestilences to destroy men's lives; all these things show us what God's feelings are towards sin. They are all illustrations of the meaning of that text, in which God speaks of sin, as—"*the abominable thing that he hates.*" Jer. xliv: 4. But all these things put together do not show us what God's feelings are towards sin so clearly and strongly as the birth of Christ does. And, of course, when we speak of the birth of Christ here, we speak of that in connection with his life and his death. He was born to die, and to die upon the cross. There was but a step between Bethlehem and Calvary—the manger and the cross. And when we see Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of life and glory nailed to the accursed tree, in shame and disgrace,—bleeding—agonizing—dying on account of sin; when we

remember that it was necessary for Christ to suffer all this, before one sin could be pardoned; then we are taught, in a way that nothing else could teach us, how God feels towards sin. And so we may well say that the birth of Christ teaches us a lesson about God's feelings towards sin. It shows us how God hates sin.

And then there is another lesson about God's feelings taught us by the birth of Christ. *It teaches us how* GOD LOVES SINNERS, at the same time that he hates their sin.

We must not think that God loves us because Jesus was born and lived and died for us. This is not so. No; but the truth is that Jesus was born, and suffered, and died for us, because God loves us. God's love was the fountain. The birth, and sufferings, and death of Christ were the stream that flowed out from that fountain. Jesus came into our world to tell us of the love of God, and to be himself the proof of that love. This was what he taught us when he uttered those wonderful words in John iii: 16:—"*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" This is a most glorious, golden text. It is the sweetest verse in the Bible. It seems as if the whole Bible had

been pressed into it. And when we think of the birth and death of Christ, of the manger and the cross, we have the best illustration that can be given of the meaning of this precious passage. And this is what the apostle means when he says:—"Herein is love,"—the evidence, or proof of love—"not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I. John iv: 10. Jesus was born to tell us of God's love; and then, that we might tell others, tell *all people* that God loves them.

"God Loves Me." Some time ago two gentlemen were riding together; as they were about to separate, one of them said to the other:

"Do you ever read your Bible?"

"Yes, but I get no benefit from it, because, to tell you the truth, I feel that I do not love God."

"Neither did I," replied the other, "but I found from the Bible that God loved me. And he loves you, too, my friend."

This was something that gentleman had never thought of before. It had a great effect upon him. As he said afterwards, in speaking about it, it made him feel "as if he had been lifted off the saddle up into the skies." He began to read the Bible, as he had never read it before.

He learned the great lesson that God loved him; and the sense of that love brought him to Jesus, and he soon become an earnest, faithful Christian.

"God Loves Bad Children." "What kind of children does God love?" said a teacher, one day to his class.

"Good children"—"good children," was the answer from several voices.

The teacher was silent. The children saw that he did not think the answer correct, and knew not what to say.

"My dear children," said he, "the Bible teaches us that—'*there is none that doeth good, no not one.*' Rom. iii: 12. This applies to children as well as to grown people. No one then, young or old, can be loved of God, or saved by him because they are good."

"Then how can we be saved?" asked a little girl in his class.

"We can be saved," said the teacher, "as bad children, as sinners. Remember that Jesus Christ—'came not to call the righteous'—those who think themselves good—'but *sinners*'—those who know and feel themselves bad—'to repentance,' and salvation. Remember, too, that—'Christ died for the *ungodly*.' Rom. ix: 6.

What the Bible teaches is, that God loves bad children, and will save them if they believe in Jesus."

"Oh! I'm glad of that, for I know that I am a bad child," said the little girl, as she burst into tears. And so she first began to learn the lesson of God's love for sinners, which we are taught by the birth of Christ.

I will close this subject with one other incident. It illustrates both the lessons we have been speaking of, as taught us by the birth of Christ; the lesson of God's feeling towards sin, and his feeling toward sinners.

"A Just God and a Saviour." This story is about two boys who lived in Scotland. In their childhood they played together, and loved each other very much. After awhile they separated. For a long, long time they had never seen each other. They met at last, under very strange circumstances. One of them had turned out badly. He had committed a crime, and was brought into court to have the sentence due to that crime passed upon him. The other boy was now the judge in this very court. When the poor prisoner saw that the judge was his old friend, he thought that he would certainly let him off very easy. When the case was stated,

instead of passing sentence at once, the judge called for the law book which stated what the penalty was for the offence which had been committed. The penalty was a fine. Two sums were specified in the law, one very small, the other very large. The poor man thought that the judge, as his old friend, would surely give him the smallest sum to pay. Instead of this he gave him the heaviest penalty. This was a sum of money he never could pay, and which would send him to prison for life. The poor fellow's heart sank within him like lead, and his head dropped on his bosom. "George, George," said the judge, "I have fixed this heavy penalty, as a just judge, to show how much I hate the sin you have committed; but to show how much I love you, as my old friend, I intend to *pay all the fine myself, so that you may go free.*" And so God acts towards us as "a just God, and a Saviour," to show how he hates sin. He appointed the heaviest penalties to be borne of our sins; and then to show how he loves sinners, he let his own beloved Son come and bear those penalties for us that we might go free.

"Jesus paid it all—all the debt we owe." And the blessed truth for us to know, is—that "*There*

is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii: 1.

And thus we have spoken of the four things connected with the birth of Christ which we proposed to consider. We have tried to show as simply as possible,—*when* Christ was born; *where* Christ was born; *how* Christ was born, and *why* Christ was born.

God grant that all young persons who read these pages may receive "the innumerable benefits" that he intended should follow from the birth of Christ!

THE CIRCUMCISION; OR, NAMING OF CHRIST

WHEN an infant is born into a family it is generally the occasion of great interest. Many questions have to be asked and answered in connection with the little stranger. Not by any means the least interesting of these is the question—What shall we *call* the baby? What shall its *name* be? Sometimes it takes a long while to answer this question. We call the little darling — *baby* — and that seems name enough at first.

I had a dear, good minister from Ireland staying at my house not long ago. We remember him and his visit with great delight. He had a large family of nine children. One day when we were sitting round the dinner table, I asked him what were the names of his children. In a moment, he began with the oldest, and repeated their names, one after another, till he had given

the seventh name. Then he stopped to think. Presently he said:—"Sure and I've forgotten the names of the two youngest; and the reason is, we never use their names. We always call them big baby and little baby; and that's all we think of." The next day he remembered the names, and gave them to us.

But, among the Jews the name of a baby always had to be settled very soon. They were required by God to circumcise their little boy babies when they were eight days old. This was the rite by which they were brought into outward connection with the Jewish church. And then their names were given, just as we give names to persons now when they are baptized, whatever their age may be. And so we read in Luke ii: 21—"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, he was called—*Jesus*."

The church of England and the Protestant Episcopal church in this country have thought the circumcision of Christ of so much importance, that they have appointed a special service to be used every year in memory of this event. The scriptures appointed to be read in that service, have reference to this circumstance in the history of our infant Saviour; and a short,

Jesus Cleanseth a Leper

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.—*St. Matt. viii: 1–4; St. Mark i: 45.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Lepers in Palestine are not so much in evidence as was the case in former days. For their own sake as well as for the public safety, these poor wretches are now confined in hospitals, but here and there a few are still to be seen sitting by the wayside begging, and uttering their piteous wail as they exhibit to the passer-by the ravages of their terrible disease.

but very suitable prayer, is appointed to be used on that occasion.

Generally, it is not of much consequence what name is given to an infant. But it was different with our blessed Lord. His name was intended to show what his character and work were to be. The name which our Saviour was to have was so important that it had been spoken of in the Old Testament, hundreds of years before he was born. The prophet Isaiah lived about seven hundred years before Christ; and when speaking of him, in one of the prophecies, he said:—"His name shall be called *Wonderful.*" Isa. ix: 6. He mentions several names of the Messiah, in this same verse, such as "Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Now, the different titles here mentioned, were never actually made use of as the names which Jesus bore. He is not *called* "Counsellor," though he *is* a "Counsellor." He is not *called* "the Mighty God," though he *is* "the Mighty God." He is not *called* "the Everlasting Father," though he *is* an "Everlasting Father" to his people. He is not *called* "the Prince of Peace," though he *is* "the Prince of Peace." And so, although he is not *called* "Wonderful," yet certainly, he *is*

"Wonderful." Thus we see that the word "called," denotes *being*. It is sometimes used to express the name which should be given to a person, and sometimes to point out to us the character which the person referred to was to bear. And in this sense the prophet Isaiah used it, when he said of the coming Saviour that "his name should be called Wonderful." He meant to say that he was to be a wonderful person. And this we know is the truth.

The name actually given to our Saviour when received into the Jewish church was, as we know,—the name—Jesus. And to this name Isaiah's word—wonderful—applies. Let us look at this name of our Redeemer in the light which this word sheds upon it. Sometimes we pluck a flower from the garden, and look at it through a magnifying-glass, and we see beautiful things in it. Now, let the name of Jesus be our flower. Let the prophet's word—*wonderful*—be our magnifying-glass. Let us look at this flower through this glass, and speak about some of the wonderful things that we see in it.

"He was called—*Jesus.*"

And when we look at this name through the prophet's glass, we can see *five* wonderful things in it.

In the first place, we see wonderful—AUTHORITY *—in this name.*

This is a wonderful thing about the name of Jesus. It is very different from ordinary names, in this respect. These are not given by any authority.

But the highest authority in the universe decided what his name should be. It was not given to him because it was the choice of his parents; or to please the fancy of any of his family; or because any of his kindred had been called by this name. No, it was not a fancy name, but an authorized name. The Lord God Almighty made choice of this name, and *commanded* it to be given to him. When the angel came down from heaven, and appeared to Mary, the Mother of our Lord, he told her that she was to have a Son, who was to be the promised Saviour of the world. He told her various things connected with this wonderful child; and among these, the name that was to be given to him. These were the angel's words:—"Thou shalt call his name—JESUS." Luke i: 31. This was God's command. The angel brought it down from heaven. This name was given by the authority of the Lord Jehovah; the King of heaven, and Ruler of ten thousand worlds.

There was the same authority for giving this name to the new-born Saviour that there was for giving the law of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. When that law was given, we are told "*God* spake these words, and said: —Thou shalt have none other gods, but me." And when a name was to be given to him who came to "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" *God* spake these words, and said:— "Thou shalt call his name—*Jesus.*"

It is an interesting thing to notice that the name given to our Saviour and the name given to his forerunner—John the Baptist—both have the same authority. And among all the myriads of children born into our world from its very beginning, these are among the few whose names were given by this high authority. The Omnipotent Jehovah gave the name of *Jesus* to his Son when he was born the infant Saviour of this ruined world. And the same Omnipotent Jehovah gave the name of John to the infant son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, who was born to be the herald, or forerunner of Christ.

We sometimes hear persons find fault with those who make a more frequent use of this name than of any other, when speaking of the

blessed Saviour. They say it is making ourselves too familiar with him to be always calling him—Jesus. I do not think any better answer can be given to those who make this objection than simply to remind them of the high authority there is for the use of this particular name of our blessed Lord; and to quote the words of the command from the God of heaven which the Angel Gabriel brought to the Virgin Mary:—"Thou *shalt* call his name —JESUS."

A great multitude of names is given to our Lord in different parts of the Bible, but this name—Jesus—is the one that God delights in above all the rest. It is the only one which he has really *commanded* us to use. And so, as we gaze at this name—Jesus—through the prophet's magnifying-glass, we can see that there is wonderful *authority* in it.

We take a second look at this name—Jesus—through the prophet's glass, and we can see that there is wonderful—COMFORT—*in it.*

Let us look for a moment at some of the places in the Bible in which we are told about the comfort that Jesus gives his people. David says that he will "*comfort them on every side.*" Ps. lxxi: 21. Isaiah tells us that this was what

he came into the world for. He says he was—"sent—to *comfort all that mourn.*" Is. lxi: 2. We all know what children do when they are in trouble. They run to their mother and tell her all about it. She takes them up in her arms, wipes away their tears, and kisses them. What a relief this is to them! They feel that none can comfort them as their mother does. Jesus knew this. And he speaks to our hearts as children, when he says, so sweetly, and so lovingly,—"*As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.*" Is. lxiv: 13. When good old Simeon took the infant Saviour up in his arms, as he found him in the temple, he called him "the *consolation* of Israel." Luke ii: 25. When the apostle Paul is speaking of the consolation which Jesus gives to his people, he calls it in one place, "*great* consolation," Philem. 7; in another, "*strong* consolation," Heb. iv: 18; and in another place, "*everlasting* consolation," II. Thess. ii: 10.

When Jesus was talking to the woman of Samaria, as he sat by Jacob's well, he showed how much superior the comfort he gives is to that found in any other source; for, pointing to that water with which the woman had come to fill her pitcher, he said—"Whosoever drinketh

of *this water* shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of *the water that I shall give* him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*" John iv: 13, 14. Here are some sweet lines, headed,—"None but Jesus." I am very sure that the person who wrote them must have had this well of water opened up in his heart, of which Jesus was speaking to the woman of Samaria:

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Gives the worn and weary rest;
Only he can soothe and ease us,
When by grief and care oppressed.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can relieve the burdened breast.

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
E'er can heal the bosom's smart;
He indeed doth fully please us,
As to him we yield the heart.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Perfect pleasure can impart."

"A Martyr's Joy." Three hundred years ago, a martyr was burned for his religion in the city of Rome. He must have felt the truth of the lines just quoted; for the last letter that he wrote to his friends, just before his death, he dated, not from prison, but "from the most

delightful pleasure-garden." In that letter he wrote thus:

"Who will believe that which I now state? In a dark hole I have found cheerfulness; in a place of bitterness and death, I have found rest and the hope of salvation. Where others weep, I have found laughter; where others fear, I have found strength. Who will believe that in a state of misery, I have had great pleasure; that in a lonely corner, I have had glorious company, and in the hardest bonds, perfect repose? All these things Jesus, my Saviour, has granted me. He is with me; he comforts me; he fills me with joy; he drives bitterness from me, and gives me strength and consolation."

Surely that happy martyr saw *wonderful comfort* in Jesus.

And children may see and find this comfort as well as grown up people.

"I So Happy." One day, a little boy was playing with his toys, when he stopped, and looking towards his mother, with his face all lighted up, he said:—"I so happy! I so happy!" "And what is it that makes my little boy feel so happy?" asked his mother.

"I've been thinking that Jesus up in heaven loves me. I love Jesus so much; and Jesus

loves Harry. This makes me happy." That little fellow was seeing wonderful comfort in the name of Jesus.

A good Christian man, who, like this little boy had found the love of Jesus make him happy, and, who had, as the Psalmist said, "been comforted by him on every side," in telling what he thought about him, expressed himself in this way:

> "He is a path, if any be misled;
> He is a robe, if any naked be;
> If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
> If any be a bondman, he is free;
> If any be but weak, how strong is he!
> To dead men, life he is; to sick men, health;
> A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth."

Certainly the man who could write of Jesus in this way must have seen wonderful comfort in him. This is a good reason why the name of Jesus may well be called a wonderful name. There is wonderful comfort in it.

And now, let us take a third look at this name —Jesus—through the prophet's glass, and we see wonderful—SALVATION—*in it.*

This is just the meaning of the name. The angel said to his Mother Mary,—"Thou shalt call his name—Jesus—for *he shall save his people*

from their sins." Matt. i: 21. Of all the things that Jesus came to do, *this* is the most important. Everything else he did was only intended to lead to this. And this is what ministers of the gospel are sent to preach about. A good old minister once said, "he had only two things to tell his people: one was that they were great sinners; and the other, that Jesus is a great Saviour." The soul is more valuable than the body. Our Saviour said, when he was on earth, that one soul is worth more than the whole world. As we are born into this world, our souls are all in a lost condition, in consequence of sin. We have lost the favor and friendship of God. We have lost all right to enter heaven; and we never should have been able to enter there, if Jesus had not come to help us. The work of Jesus in our world was to save these lost souls. This was what he meant, when he said:—"The Son of Man is come to seek, and to *save* that which was lost." Luke xix: 10. And it was not lost Jews only, or lost souls of any one particular nation that he came to save; but lost souls anywhere, and everywhere.

By the prophet Isaiah, he says,—"Look unto me and be ye saved, *all ye ends of the earth.*" Is. xlv: 27. There is salvation in Jesus for

anybody and everybody who will seek it in the way that he points out. And this way is very plain and simple. Here is an illustration to show us what an easy way of salvation it is that Jesus has appointed:

"Believing Saves." A dying man lay in dread of what was coming to him. He sent for a Christian friend to talk with him and comfort him.

"I am in the dark," he said to this friend. And well he might say so, for he had been a great sinner. "I am in the dark, and am dying. What am I to do?"

"Jesus came to save the lost. Jesus died and rose again to save us. This is our message to lost sinners."

"But what have I to do?" eagerly asked the dying man.

"Nothing. Christ has done it all. *The work that saves is done.*"

The anxious eye was closed for a moment, while he repeated over, very slowly to himself, —"*The work that saves is done.*" Then, passage after passage was read to him, pointing out the one link that knits the sinner to the sin-bearing work of the Son of God; "he that *believeth*, is not condemned;" "he that *believeth*,

is justified;" "he that *believeth*, hath everlasting life."

"But what am I to believe?"

"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Again he closed his eyes, while he repeated, three or four times over "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*"

"Yes," added his friend, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation. This is the good news we bring you."

"I see it," he said, and the peace of God took possession of his soul. In that peace he died.

It is a great thing to know Jesus as our Saviour. And it is no less a great thing to know that there is no other Saviour. Here is an incident that strikingly illustrates this statement:

"None Other Name." Sometime ago a merchant in London, was led to see himself a sinner. This feeling led him to try to find a Saviour. His earnest desire was to have his soul saved. He gave up doing anything he knew to be wrong. He began to hold family worship, and attended church regularly. Still he did not

feel right. The burden of sin on his conscience grew heavier all the time. He was trying to save himself by his own good works. But we know it is impossible to do this.

One day, while going along one of the crowded streets of London, he reached a spot where a blind man was accustomed to sit, and read aloud from a Bible, with raised type,—that wonderful invention by which the blind are enabled to read through the ends of their fingers.

As this gentleman passed by, the blind man was reading the fourth chapter of the Acts, and had just reached the twelfth verse,—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved." When in the midst of this verse, he came to the bottom of the page; and, as he was turning over the leaf, he repeated several times, the last three words on the page read:—"None other name"—"None other name," etc. The gentleman went on his way; but he could not forget the words he had heard; "None other name—None other name." They followed him through all the bustle of the day; "None other name—None other name." He went home at night, when

the business of the day was over. As he entered the house,—"None other name—None other name," were the words still sounding in his ears. He retired to rest; but as he laid his head upon his pillow, the last sound he seemed to hear before falling asleep, and the first, on awaking in the morning, was still that of the same re-echoing words,—"None other name,—None other name."

And then he said to himself,—"I see now, what it means. I have been making a mistake. I have been thinking that praying and reading the Bible, and going to church would save me. This was my mistake. It is *only Jesus* who can save. I must cast myself on him."

And then, with the simple faith of a little child, he went to Jesus, in prayer, and asked him to pardon, and save him. Jesus heard and answered his prayer, and the man was filled with peace and joy in believing.

"How a Beautiful Hymn was Written." There is an interesting incident mentioned in the life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, and which led to the writing of one of his very sweet hymns.

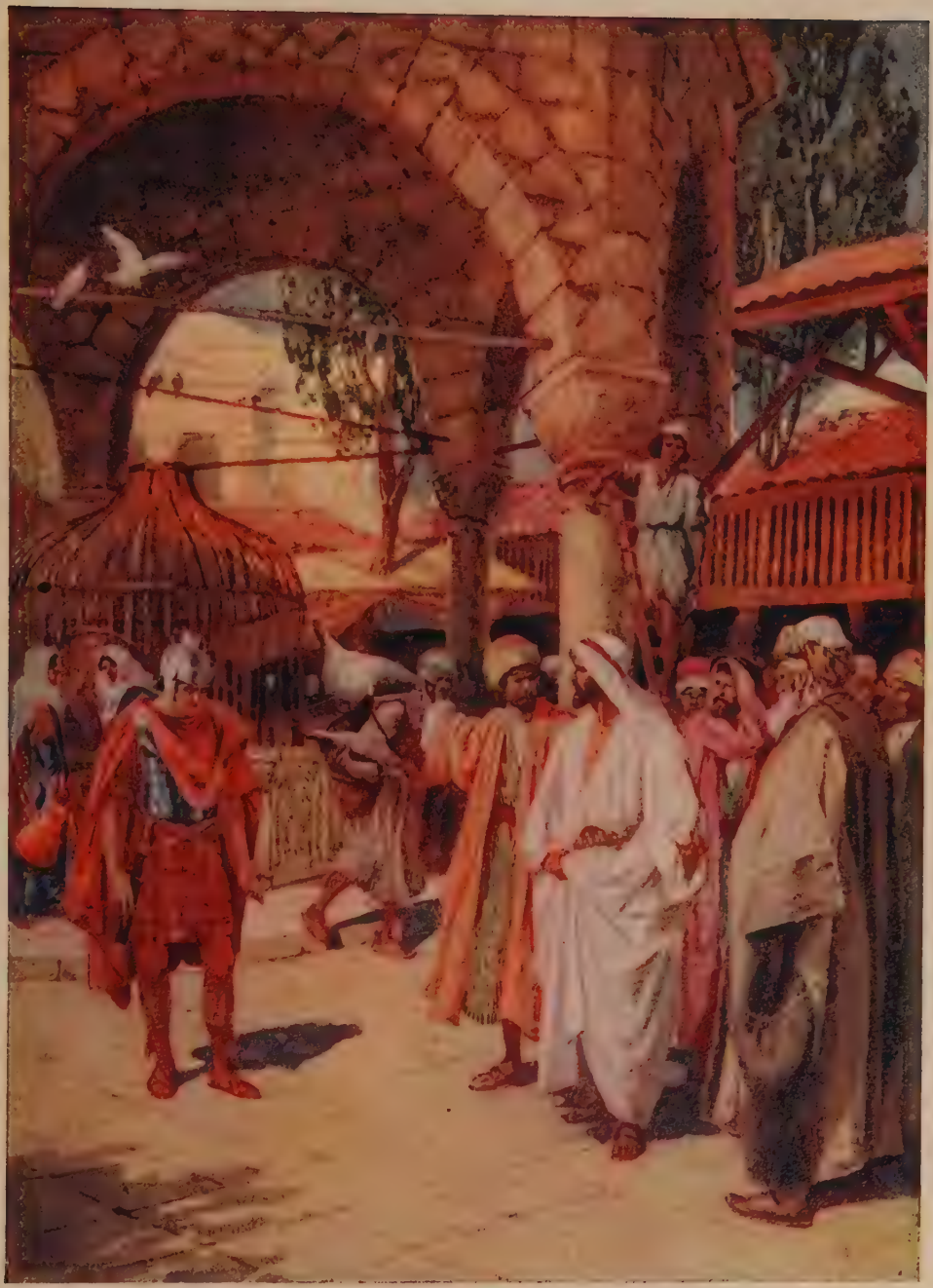
One day, Mr. Wesley was sitting by an open window looking out over the bright and beautiful fields in summer time. Presently a little

The Faith of the Centurion

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed. Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.—*St. Matt. viii: 5–13.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Travellers will recognize in this scene (Capernaum being now but a heap of ruins) the Square of the Fountain at Jaffa. The ancient pillars still surrounding the well in the form of an octagon, used to support a stone-built dome, which has been recently removed.



bird, flitting about in the sunshine, attracted his attention. Just then, a hawk came sweeping down towards the little bird. The poor thing, very much frightened, was darting here and there, trying to find some place of refuge. In the bright sunny air, in the leafy-trees, or the green-fields, there was no hiding place from the fierce grasp of the hawk. But, seeing the open window, and a man sitting by it, the bird flew, in its extreme terror, towards it, and, with a beating-heart, and quivering-wing, found refuge in Mr. Wesley's bosom. He sheltered it from the threatening danger, and saved it from a cruel death.

Mr. Wesley was, at that time, suffering from severe trials, and was feeling the need of a refuge in his own time of trouble, as much as the trembling little bird did that nestled so safely in his bosom. So he took up his pen and wrote that sweet hymn:

"Jesus, Saviour of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the waves of trouble roll,
While the tempest still is high."

That prayer grew into one of the most beautiful hymns in our language, and multitudes of people, when in sorrow and danger, have found

comfort while they have said or sung the last lines of that hymn:

"All my trust on thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head,
With the shadow of thy wing."

There is wonderful salvation in the name of Jesus.

We take a fourth look at this name through the prophet's glass, and we see that there is wonderful—GLORY—*in it.*

There was great glory attending Jesus, even amidst the humility that marked his course when he was here on earth. An eloquent English minister has written very beautifully about this glory. He says:—"His birth was very humble, and yet it was celebrated with hallelujahs by angels from heaven. His lodging place was poor, and yet a star was sent by God to show the wise men how to find it. He had no long train of persons in splendid dresses to follow him; but multitudes of patients waited on him, seeking and finding healing of both soul and body. There was more glory in this than if crowds of princes even had followed him. He made the dumb that attended him to sing his praises; the lame to leap for joy; the

deaf to hear his voice, and the blind to see his glory. He had no guard of soldiers to receive and obey his orders, but health and sickness, life and death, stood ready to obey his commands. He did not walk on costly carpets; but when he walked on the sea, its waters supported him. All parts of creation, except sinful men united to show him honor and glory. He kept no treasure; but when he needed money, the sea sent it to him in the mouth of a fish. He had no barns, nor corn-fields; but when he wished to make a feast, with five barley-loaves, and two small fishes, he could supply the wants of hungry thousands. None of all the monarchs of the world ever gave such entertainments. In these things we see the glory that appeared in the *life* of Jesus."

And even amidst the gloom and darkness of his death we see the rays of his glory shining forth. The leaders of the Jewish people showed no sorrow when Jesus died, but heaven and earth were mourners then. The sun was clothed in black. The inhabitants of the earth showed no signs of fear; but the earth itself trembled as Jesus hung on the cross. There were few to show the Jewish sign of grief by rending their garments; but, the solid rocks were rent when

Christ died, as if *they* were tenderer than the hearts of men. He had no grave of his own, but had to be buried in a borrowed tomb. And yet, wonderful was the work he did in that rocky sepulchre. Death and the grave never had any one like him to enter their gloomy kingdom. He entered it as an invader, and came forth from it as a conqueror. On the morning of the third day he took up again the life which he had voluntarily laid down. And in doing this, he robbed death of his sting, and broke the chains by which he bound men. And when Jesus walked forth from the tomb, he left the door open behind him, that all his people might come forth, too.

What glory we see here connected with the name of Jesus, when he first came into our world!

Now move this glass a little. Look away from the glory connected with the first coming of Christ to the glory he will have when he comes again. His glory then will be much greater than it was before. He will come then, in the clouds of heaven, "*and all the holy angels with him; and then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.*" Matt. xxv: 31.

Then all nations will be gathered before him, and he will judge them. He will tell who of

them are to be saved, and who are to be lost. He will bestow upon his people the rewards they are to receive and give them the crowns they are to wear forever. How great the glory of Jesus will be when he is seen in the midst of his saved people, introducing them to all the joys of his heavenly kingdom, and listening to the song of gladness they will sing—as the great congregation shall unite their hearts and voices—and say:

"Blessing, and honor, and *glory*, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

And now, if we make another little turn of this glass, we shall see even greater glory yet connected with the name of Jesus.

Not only will he have the glory of saving his people, and the glory of giving them their rewards; but he will also have the glory of being worshiped by all the angels in heaven, and by all God's creatures everywhere. The apostle Paul teaches us this in the second chapter of the Philippians. Here he speaks first of the wonderful humiliation of Christ, in taking our nature upon him, and coming into the world as God's servant, and being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And then the apostle goes on to speak of the glory

that was to follow to our Saviour, in consequence of this humiliation. "Wherefore," says he,—"God also hath highly exalted him, and given him *a name which is above every name;* that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii: 6-12.

And notice here, that the same name is given to our Saviour, in the lowest depths of his humiliation, and in the highest display of his glory. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," said the angel who foretold his birth. When he was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger—*Jesus*—was the name he bore. And when the time for his highest honor comes; when he is exalted above all principalities, and powers; when all the angels of heaven bow down to him, and every creature of God worships him, still—*Jesus*—is "the name above every name," by which he is known; and—*Jesus*—is the name around which all this glory gathers.

There is wonderful glory in this name.

We take one more look at this name through the prophet's glass, and we see wonderful—STABILITY *—in it.*

The name—Jesus—is a name that will last without any change. The names that we have in this world cannot be lasting. Some are changed while we live, and they will all be changed after we die. We often hear of names being changed. When a woman is married she changes her name. The family name received from her father is given up, and she takes the name of her husband. And sometimes persons have property left them on condition of changing their names. And then they apply to the Legislature, and get an act or law passed allowing them to change their names. When we die, our names are cut into marble that makes our tombstones. But *that* is the last that will be known of them. We shall not carry our names with us into the eternal world. We cannot tell what our names will be in heaven. We only know they will be different from what they are here. God says his people shall then "be called by a *new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.*" Is. lxii: 2.

And Jesus himself says the same thing. In the Epistle which St. John wrote to the church at Pergamos, in the name of his master, he was directed to say for him,—"To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the

stone *a new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*" Rev. ii: 17. But there will be no change in the name that Jesus bears, either in this world or in the world to come. He has borne this name for nearly two thousand years already. And when ten thousand times that number of years shall have rolled away, he will be known by the same name still. When speaking on this subject, David says,—"*His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun.*" Ps. lxxii: 17. This idea is beautifully expressed in the words of Montgomery's sweet hymn that we often sing:

"The tide of time shall never,
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand forever,
That name to us is love."

Men have been very ingenious in trying to find out ways by which their names might be remembered among men when they themselves have passed away. The story is told of a soldier in ancient times, who wished to preserve his name in some way. In order to do this he engaged a celebrated artist to make him a shield, and to work his name into the material of which the shield was composed, in such a way that the name could not be taken out without

destroying the shield. It was done. The soldier carried that shield bravely with him through many a hard-fought battle, feeling proud to think that his name was made so enduring. But that soldier is gone; his shield is gone; the artist who made it is gone; and no one knows the name that was wrought into that shield, nor the name of the artist who did the work.

"King Ptolemy and his Lighthouse." There is a story told of Ptolemy, one of the kings of Egypt, that may come in, by way of illustration here. He undertook the building of a lighthouse on a little island in the harbor of the city of Alexandria. This lighthouse was one of the most famous ever built. It was five hundred and twenty feet high. It is said that the light from the top of it could be seen at night for a distance of more than forty miles. We are told that this lighthouse stood for sixteen hundred years. The little island on which it was built was called Pharos. This name was applied to the lighthouse itself. It was known as "The Pharos of the Nile." Indeed in the French and Spanish language the word used for lighthouse is taken from this word Pharos. This lighthouse was very strongly built, of great massive

stones. Ptolemy thought he would have his name engraved upon this lighthouse, and so leave it as a monument that would make his memory immortal. Sostratus was the name of the architect who built it. Ptolemy told him what he wanted him to do. But the architect thought that as the king only furnished the *money* for the building, while he himself furnished the brains, or the knowledge and skill, by which the work was done, it would not be fair for the king to have all the honor of putting up that great lighthouse, and for him to have none. So, without the king's knowledge, he cut his own name—Sostratus—deep and clear in one of the great stones of the building. This he covered carefully over with plaster or cement, and on that he put the name of the king. It lasted during Ptolemy's life. But in the course of time, the influence of the weather began to be felt on that plaster, or cement. The sea dashed against it. The sun and the air acted upon it. It began to crack. Piece by piece it fell off. Finally it all disappeared; and the name of the king went with it. And then, underneath where Ptolemy's name had been—deeply cut into the solid rock—came out the name of Sostratus.

But Jesus, our glorious Saviour, is erecting a building that will be far more enduring than Ptolemy's famous Pharos of the Nile. This building is his church. The apostle Peter calls this church "a spiritual house," or temple. And each believer in Jesus, or each soul saved by his grace, will be "a living stone" in this temple. And each of these living stones will have the name of Jesus engraved upon it. Jesus says himself, that he will write his name upon them. Rev. iii: 12. And so we see that so long as the church of Christ shall last, so long as the souls of his people live, his name, which is written upon them, shall endure. The life which Jesus gives us is everlasting life; and so the name connected with that life must be an everlasting name. There is great stability in it.

And thus, as we hold up this name—JESUS—before us, and gaze at it through the glass which the prophet Isaiah puts in our hands, we see five wonderful things in it. These are wonderful *authority;* wonderful *comfort;* wonderful *salvation;* wonderful *glory*, and wonderful *stability*.

May God teach us all to love the name of Jesus! And then, as we go on studying it, by the help of the Holy Spirit, through time, and

through eternity, we shall be always finding in it new light, new meaning, new beauties, and new wonders

"Jesus! the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

IN the previous chapter we have spoken of the Circumcision; or, naming of Christ. This was a service that the Jewish religion required to be performed in the case of every male child born among that people. This service was performed when the child was eight days old.

But there was another interesting service appointed for the Jews to observe. This was not required for all the Jewish children, but only for the first-born child in every family. It was a service to be performed forty days after the birth of the child. But this service had reference to the mother, as well as to the child. And so, when forty days had passed, after the birth of our blessed Lord, we read (Luke ii: 22-32), that his parents "brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord," and "to do for him after the custom of the law." When a

child was presented in the temple on these occasions, there was always a sacrifice to be offered. If the parents were able to afford it, the sacrifice was to consist of "a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove for a sin offering." But, if they were too poor to buy a lamb, then they were allowed to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, instead of the lamb. Levit. xii: 6, 8. Joseph and Mary were very poor. They were descended indeed from the royal family of David, yet they were so poor that when they presented their first-born child, in the temple, they could not afford to bring a lamb for the offering. This child, Jesus, was the Maker of the World, and the owner of all things in it. And yet, his parents were so poor that on this important occasion, two young pigeons was the only offering they could bring for their child.

There was an interesting matter of history connected with this service. The law which required it was first established in Egypt. You remember that the last dreadful plague which God sent on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, because they would not let his people go, was the death of their first-born. The angel of the Lord *passed over* the land, at the solemn hour of

The Resurrection of the Widow's Son

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.—*St. Luke vii: 11–17.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Nain is situated on the slope of a hill, misnamed the "Lesser Hermon," which forms the northern extremity of the ridge of Gilboa, and overlooks the plain of Esdraelon, and Nazareth, from which it is distant about six miles. The ceremonial observed on the occasion of a funeral, such as is here referred to, obtains to-day as in Biblical times. The corpse, swathed in linen grave-clothes, the head being bound about with a napkin, is borne on an open bier to the place of interment. In a small community, the greater part of the population show their sympathy with the grief of more immediate friends and relations by following the body to the grave, while even the poorest would feel it a disgrace, did they not provide at least two hired mourners and two flute players to lead the procession.

midnight, and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians. But the first-born of the Israelites were all spared. God protected them while his angel was destroying the first-born of the Egyptians. And because he had saved all the first-born of the Israelites from death on that occasion, God told them that always after that he would claim all their first-born children as belonging to him, and as especially his own. And the law of the Jewish church was that every first-born child should be brought to the temple, forty days after its birth, when a sacrifice was made for it, and an offering presented to God of five shekels of silver. This was the price of the child's redemption. A shekel of silver was worth about fifty cents of our money.

And thus we see there were three things connected with this service of presenting a first-born child in the temple which God desired the Jewish parents always to remember. One was the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians on that memorable night. The other, was the preservation of their own first-born. The third was that their first-born all belonged to God, but were redeemed from being his ministers, and were allowed to engage in other

business, by that payment of five shekels, or two dollars and fifty cents of our money.

And now Joseph and Mary have offered their sacrifice. The service connected with the presentation of their wonderful child in the temple is finished. But before they have time to go out of the temple, a very interesting incident occurs. A pious old Jew named Simeon came in at that moment. He had long been studying the Old Testament Scriptures. He had found out that the time was near at hand for the coming of that blessed Saviour, who was to be "the consolation of Israel." He had been praying earnestly, and waiting patiently for his coming. God had told him that he should live to see the Messiah. And just then, the Holy Spirit led Simeon into the temple, and gave him to understand that this child, of these poor parents, was the Great Deliverer, of whom "Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write." What a happy moment that was for this old man! How his heart leaped for joy when he knew this! How tenderly, and lovingly he took that child of wonders in his arms, and exclaimed—in the overflowing-fulness of his grateful heart—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for

mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke ii: 29-32.

Of the other things which Simeon said on this occasion, and of the aged prophetess Anna, who came in at the same time, I should like to speak also, but cannot do so now.

The words of Simeon here quoted are sufficient in themselves to occupy our thoughts. And, in speaking about them, there are two things for us to notice. One is,—*what old Simeon saw in the infant Jesus.* The other is, —*the effect this sight had on him.*

When Simeon held the infant Jesus in his arms, he saw *three* things in him.

The first thing that he saw in him was—SALVATION.

He said,—"Mine eyes have seen thy *salvation.*" He saw this in that wonderful name that we were speaking of in our last chapter. But this is something that we may speak of many times without getting to the bottom of it, or to the top of it, or to the length and breadth of it. There are more than a hundred and fifty places in the Bible in which this great salvation is spoken of. Nobody can ever tell *all* there is

to be told about the wonderful salvation that is in Jesus.

When the Queen of Sheba came to see King Solomon in all his glory, she said she had heard so much concerning him, of his wisdom, and riches, and grandeur, that she thought there must be a mistake about it, and she could not believe the accounts that were brought to her. But since she had come to Jerusalem, and had seen the temple and palaces he had built, and all the greatness of his kingdom, she confessed that instead of having heard more than was true —"the half had not been told." And whatever we may have heard about Jesus, and the salvation that is in him, yet, when we come to know him ourselves, and clearly understand how unspeakable his love is, and how wonderful the grace and the blessings he bestows upon his people, we are obliged to say, in the language of the hymn—"The half was never told."

Let us look now at some illustrations of the wonderful ways in which Jesus saves those who call upon him.

"Saved From a Lion." The Rev. Dr. Moffat, from England, was a missionary in Southern Africa for over fifty years. He had a son born and brought up in that country, who took his

father's place in trying to make Jesus known as a Saviour to the natives in that part of Africa. This missionary, the Rev. John Moffat, tells this story of a native lad who had attended the services of the missionary. He was engaged once with some of his companions in hunting. They were in the full and eager pursuit of some animal, when suddenly, and unexpectedly, this lad found himself face to face with a lion, and almost touching him. His black face seemed as if it would turn white with fear. His companions were almost as much frightened as himself. They were a little further off and saw his danger, but were unable to help him. In that awful moment the poor boy thought of Jesus, the Mighty Saviour, of whom he had so often heard the missionary speak. In his danger and distress, he cried out, in hearing of his companions,—"O, Jesus! save me now, and I will serve thee forever!"

Soon after he had offered this prayer, the lion turned round, and walked quietly off, without touching the boy. He never forgot that hour. Wherever he went, the thought followed him, —Jesus saved me from the lion. He thought of another lion, spoken of in the Bible, not to be seen with our bodily eyes, even Satan,

who "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." I. Peter v: 8. Then he prayed earnestly to Jesus to deliver him from this lion, too. Jesus heard his prayer, and he became an earnest Christian.

And Jesus has the same power to save in this country that he has in Africa. Here is an incident connected with the life and labors of that saintly man, David Brainard, who spent his days in trying to teach the poor Indians about the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. We may call it:

"A Soul Saved by a Tear." An Indian guide in the Revolutionary war was fatally wounded. A Christian friend went to see him, and said,—"Do you know anything about Jesus Christ?"

"Oh, yes, me know much 'bout him. Long time ago—very young—me go see Indian missionary, Brainard. In little log house, all alone, white man look sick—meet Indian—pray with him—make much prayer—talk out of spirit-book. Many times he look on Indian and say, 'Poor friend,'—and *his eyes all run down with tears.*"

"Do you think you will meet him when you die?"

"Oh! yes; me certain Jesus Christ never forget poor Indian. Me never forget him one day.

Me hope see him, and pale-faced missionary, before morning. Me no fear. *Inside eyes all open.* Inside heart all smooth."

And so the poor Indian passed away,—a soul saved by a tear. But when he said, so expressively,—"*inside eyes all open*," he was only repeating, in different words, the same thought, uttered eighteen hundred years before by good old Simeon, when he said, as he held the infant Jesus in his arms,—"*Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*"

"I Have Seen Jesus." This was the saying of a half-witted man, who had turned away from living a very wicked life, when he was asked what had led to this great change. The late Dr. Bushnell, of Hartford, Connecticut, tells this story. He was well acquainted with the person to whom it refers. In addition to his being naturally weak-minded, he had fallen into very wicked ways. He swore dreadfully; he was a confirmed drunkard; he would tell lies, and steal, and do almost every thing that was sinful.

At one time there was a revival of religion in connection with Dr. Bushnell's church. Among others who came to see the doctor then, with the earnest inquiry—What must we do to be

saved? was this weak-minded, wicked man. Thoughtless people, when they saw him going to church, supposed he was only going in mockery and to make sport of it. And even serious Christians looked on him with pity, and rather wished he would not come. But when Dr. Bushnell came to converse with him, he found him so earnest, and apparently so sincere, that he did not hesitate to receive him into the communion of the church. And the whole course of the poor man's life, after this, showed that the doctor was right in doing so. From that time onward, everything about the man showed that "old things had passed away" with him, "and all things had become new." He became an humble and consistent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. All his bad habits were given up. He never drank intoxicating liquor again. A profane word was never heard from his lips. He was truthful and honest; regular in attending church; diligent in reading the Bible, and faithful in practising what it taught.

To those who had known him in former years this change seemed wonderful. And when he was asked, by some, to tell what it was which had led him to it, his answer was, in the words

already quoted,—"*I have seen Jesus.*" This explained it all. He was weak-minded. He could not argue about "the deep things of God." He could give no account of the mysteries of redemption. It was not the kindness of Christians that had won him. No one had wept tears of tender compassion over him, as Brainard did over the poor Indian; for nobody seemed to think it possible for this poor simple one to be saved. But, like the poor Indian,—"*his inside eyes had been opened.*" Like old Simeon,—*he had seen Jesus.* And there was salvation in this sight. It was seeing Jesus that saved Paul, the persecutor, and made him the great apostle of the Gentiles. It was seeing Jesus that saved the African boy from one lion that would have destroyed his body and from the more terrible lion that would have destroyed his soul. It was seeing Jesus with his "inside eyes," that saved the poor Indian. And the poor way-faring man, though a fool, did not err in this way of salvation. Even *he* was saved, when he could say,—"I have seen Jesus." There was salvation in this sight, as old Simeon beheld it, and there is salvation in it still.

But there was—LIGHT—*in the sight which Simeon saw as well as salvation.*

He tells us that the infant Saviour, whom he held in his arms, was intended by God to be—"a *light* to *lighten* the Gentiles."

The Jews generally did not believe what Simeon here said about the Gentiles. They were very narrow-minded on this subject. They thought that God did not care for any other nation in the world but theirs. It used to offend them very much to say anything about the Gentiles having any share in the blessings of salvation. But God had taught Simeon to know better than this. He had learned that God "was no respecter of persons; but that in every nation" he was ready to save and bless all who would humbly seek his mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. And so Simeon said Christ was to be—"a light to lighten *the Gentiles.*" He said also, that this "salvation was prepared *before the face of all people.*" This means that it was intended to be for the use and blessing of all people.

When this word "light" is used in the Bible, it sometimes means *knowledge*, and sometimes *happiness*, joy, or gladness. When Jesus is called "a light" for us Gentiles, the meaning is that he would give us knowledge, or would teach us to know ourselves, as sinners, and to

know himself as the Saviour of sinners; and that by giving us this knowledge, he would make us happy. Let us look at some illustrations of the way in which Jesus proves himself to be a "light to lighten the Gentiles," and of the happiness which this light gives.

"The Tartar-Chiefs; or, Jesus a Light to the Gentiles." Two Tartar-chiefs, from the borders of China, came to St. Petersburg, in Russia, some years ago. Their object in coming was to study the system of education that prevailed in Europe, and to learn the way in which business was done there. They brought recommendations with them, which showed that they were among the best and most sensible men of their tribe.

Now it happened, that while they were in St. Petersburg, a German missionary was there, trying to make a translation of the New Testament into the language of the Tartar tribes. He engaged these chiefs to help him in his translation. They gladly agreed to do so, because they thought it would help them to gain the knowledge they had come to seek. This work was carried on for many months. The missionary and the two chiefs each took a number of verses to translate. Every day they

met to compare these translations together, and to decide upon which was the best. In the course of this work, the chiefs asked many questions about the religion of the gospel, which the missionary was always glad to answer.

Finally the work was completed, and the missionary and the two chiefs met, as he supposed, for the last time. There lay the finished translation on the table. As their work was done, the missionary expected the chiefs to say "good-by," and go away. But they did not go. They sat in silence by the table, but looking very serious and thoughtful. The missionary wondered what was the matter, and inquired if they had any questions to ask.

"No," they answered, "but we have something to say."

"Well, my friends, say on," replied the missionary. And then, to his surprise and delight, for he had made no effort at all to convert them from the religion of their tribe, the elder of them, speaking for himself and for his friend, said, as he pointed to the translation on the table,—"I wish to tell you that we are both converted to the religion of that book. We have been zealous followers of the doctrines of Fo."—(This is the Chinese name for Buddha,

the chief idol worshiped by the millions of India.)—"We have studied attentively the books which contain his doctrines, but the more we studied them, the darker our minds became, and our hearts remained empty. But, in studying the doctrines of Jesus Christ, we have found it just the contrary. The more we study his words, the plainer they become to us, until at length it seems as if Jesus were talking with us." Ah! they had seen Jesus. They had found him to be indeed, as old Simeon said,—"*a light to lighten the Gentiles.*" And what a beautiful illustration this incident affords of the truth and meaning of the Psalmist's words, when he says,—"*The entrance of thy word giveth light; It giveth understanding to the simple.*" Ps. cxix: 130.

"Light in the Valley." A blind Hindoo boy, when dying, said joyfully:—"I see! I see! I have light now. I see the King in his beauty. Tell the missionary the blind boy sees. I glory in Jesus."

A wounded soldier, when asked if he were ready to depart, said,—"Oh, yes; my Saviour, in whom I have long trusted, is with me now. The dark valley is lighted up by his smile."

A young man, who had lately found Jesus, was laid upon his dying bed. A friend, who

stood near him, asked,—"Is it dark?" In speaking of this afterwards, the friend said,—"I shall never forget his reply to my question. 'No, no,' he exclaimed, 'it's light, it's light, it's *all light!*'" And thus, in the joy which this light gives he entered into heaven.

These were all Gentiles; when we see what knowledge Jesus gave them, and what happiness they found in that knowledge, we understand how well old Simeon, as he held the infant Jesus in his arms, might say of him, that he was sent to be—"*a light to lighten the Gentiles.*" This was one thing that Simeon saw in him.

But there was still one other thing in the sight which Simeon saw in the infant Saviour, and this was—GLORY.

There was *salvation* in this sight; there was *light* in it; and there was *glory* in it also. He will be—said Simeon—"*the glory of thy people Israel.*" The prophet Isaiah was speaking of this same Saviour when he said,—"They shall hang on him all the glory of his Father's house." Is. xxii: 24. The chief glory that a nation has, is made up of the wise, and good, and great, and useful men who have belonged to it. We speak of Washington as the glory of America. We feel it an honor to belong to the nation which

At the House of Simon, the Pharisee

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment. . . . And Jesus said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.—*St. Luke vii: 36–38, 44–48.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Either at Nain, or somewhere in the neighborhood, Jesus accepts the hospitality patronisingly offered by a wealthy Pharisee to the new prophet. That an outcast should obtain access to the divan of a personage of austere religiosity may seem strange, although it is quite in accordance with Eastern custom, which does not refuse admittance to this semi-public part of the establishment, even to the most wretched and degraded, whose very touch would be deemed a pollution. At this period of history, Jews of the better class had adopted the Roman custom of reclining at meals; poorer folk retaining the ancient Oriental habit, which still obtains, of sitting upan the mat-covered floor around a low central table a few inches in height.

could claim Washington as one of its people. In Holland they call William, Prince of Orange, the glory of their nation. England, our grand old mother country, has had so many wise, and good, and great men, that it is hard to tell which to speak of as the best and greatest. They all help to make up the glory of the people of England. And anyone who was born in England may feel it an honor to belong to a country which has produced so many good and great men.

And in the same way it is the glory of the Jewish nation, or of Israel, as a people, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, belonged to their nation. Jesus was a Jew. And the Jewish people may well feel it an honor to belong to the nation among whom he was born. It is true in this sense, that he is—"the glory of his people Israel."

But it may be said we are Gentiles; we are not Israelites, and therefore, we cannot share in this glory. True, we are not Jews. But, if we believe in Jesus, and love, and serve him, we *are* his people, too. We are his people, as St. Paul says,—"born not after his flesh, but after the Spirit." Gal. iv: 29. And in this way we become "his people Israel," in a spiritual sense.

And then Jesus will be *our* glory, too. Yes, and this glory which we shall have in Jesus, will be a greater glory than the Jews have, whose only connection with him is that of belonging to the same nation. This glory that we shall have in Jesus will be made up of all the wonderful things he has done for us.

Let me give an illustration of what I mean. I am indebted to Mr. Ruskin for this illustration, but not for the application made of it. Suppose I set before you three beautiful jewels. One is a sapphire, the next an opal, and the third, a diamond. And then suppose I should take a handful of mud from the trodden streets of a busy city. I set the mud down beside the jewels. The principal things that make up that mud are clay, and sand, and soot. Then I point to the beautiful blue sapphire, and tell you that this is made out of the clay in that mud. I point to the sparkling opal, and tell you this is made out of the sand in that mud. I point to that brilliant diamond, and tell you it was made out of the soot in that mud. This is true. God has made this change. He made these jewels out of that ugly mud. We know not *how* it is done. But suppose we knew. Suppose that we could take a handful of mud, and change it into

jewels. Then, you see, there would be a connection between us and the beauty and glory of those jewels. Whatever glory the jewels have we have given it to them. It might be said of us that we *were* the glory of those jewels. We taught them how to shine. Their glory would belong to us. And it is exactly so with Jesus and his people. He calls them his "*jewels.*" Malachi iii: 17. They are his, because he made them. And he makes them very much as other jewels are made. See what David says of himself, before God made him one of his jewels. "He brought me up," says he, "out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay." Ps. xl: 2. David was *in* the mire, was *part* of the mire, before he was made a jewel. But mire and mud are both the same. And so we may say that God makes *his* jewels out of mud. They are spiritual jewels, made out of spiritual mud; and this means the sin in which we were lying, and living in when God made us his jewels.

And these jewels will shine in his crown forever. But as they shine there, their brightness and their beauty will be only what he gives them. And so, we see how true it will be of all his saved people, that he will be their glory. We cannot tell how great this glory will be.

But we know that Jesus will share his own glory with his people. John xvii: 22. "And we know that when he shall appear, *we shall be* LIKE *him.*" I. John iii: 2. His people will be clothed in glorious robes; and enjoy glorious rest; and wear glorious crowns; and inherit a glorious kingdom. And this glory will never fade. It will last forever, and grow brighter as eternity goes on. And all this shows us how well it may be said that Jesus will be—"*the glory of his people Israel.*"

And so we have spoken of the three things that old Simeon saw in the infant Saviour. These are—*salvation*, *light*, and *glory*.

There is one other thing to speak of, this is, —*the effect this sight had on him.*

What this was we see, as we hear Simeon exclaim,—"*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*" These words have been sung, or chanted, as a hymn in prose, in the Christian church for nineteen hundred years. When this song of Simeon is put into Latin, the first two words are "Nunc Dimittis." And the song is called the Nunc Dimittis. By *departing* in peace, Simeon meant *dying* in peace. And so we see that the effect of this sight upon him, or what he learned from from seeing Jesus, was to

be able to die in peace. None can have true peace in dying, but those who have seen Jesus, by faith, as old Simeon saw him. It is sin that makes us afraid of death. And while our sin is unpardoned, we have good reason to be afraid of death, because death is the messenger that God sends to bring us into his presence, that we may receive the punishment which our sins deserve. This fear or dread of death, is the sting that he has. And this is what the apostle Paul means when he says,—"The *sting* of death is sin." I. Cor. xv: 56. And we never can have true happiness or peace in death, till this sting is taken away. But Jesus is the only one "who has power on earth to forgive sins." When we believe in him, or see him by faith, as Simeon did, then "his blood cleanseth us from all sin." And this is the only thing that can take away the sting from death. As the hymn says:

> "If sin be pardoned, we're secure,
> Death hath no sting beside."

God made use of a wasp once to teach this great lesson to a man who was afraid to die. This story illustrates very strikingly the great truth of which we are now speaking. We may call it:

"The Wasp's Sting." A gentleman in England was the squire of the village in which he lived. He was very rich. His house was like a palace. His grounds were very extensive and very beautiful. A fine stream of water ran through his land, and widened out at one place into a lovely lake. There were hills, and dales, and noble forest trees surrounding his house, so that it looked like an earthly paradise. He had everything around him the world could give to make him happy. But he was *not* happy, because he was not loving or serving God. He was living, as the Bible expresses it,—"without God in the world." At length, he was taken sick. His sickness was of a severe and dangerous character. And as he had not thought about God when he was well, he was not willing to do so, even now, when sickness came upon him. The thought of death was so dreadful to him that he would not allow any one to speak of it in his presence. His wife was a God-fearing Christian woman. She begged him to let her send for their minister. But he refused. "No," said he, "I don't want any minister to come near me. I have lived for this world, and I wish to enjoy it to the very last."

His wife prayed earnestly and constantly for him, that God would have mercy on him, and bring him to a better state of thought and feeling before he should be called to die. God heard and answerd her prayer in a very singular way.

One day an old friend of the family, who was an earnest Christian minister, came to visit them. He asked if he might see the squire. His wife went in and told him that this friend had called, and wished to see him. At first he refused to see him. But finally he yielded to the earnest pleading of his wife, and said:— "Well, let him come in; but tell him that he must not say a word to me on the subject of religion."

The friend entered the sick man's chamber, and as he did so, he lifted up his heart in silent prayer to God, and asked for help, that he might say something that would do the sick man good. He sat down by his bedside and talked with him about his sickness, and what medicine he was taking for it. While doing this, he resolved to try and get an opportunity of saying something to him about his soul. But he could not do it. His thoughts seemed to fail him. He could not think of a single

thing to say. This seemed very strange to him. He never had felt so before, and was quite at a loss to know what to make of it. As he sat there, wondering why he could not speak freely on this subject, as he had always been accustomed to do, a large wasp came buzzing round the sick man's bed. It flew here and there about his head, as if threatening to sting him. This disturbed and troubled him greatly. The servants were called in. They chased the wasp away from the sufferer's bed, and finally succeeded in killing it. Then they went out of the room, and the sick man lay exhausted.

"Why were you afraid of the wasp?" asked the minister.

"Because I feared it might sting me."

"If you had known that its sting had been taken away, would you have been afraid?"

"Of course not. I'm not a fool. If it had no sting, it could only buzz about, without doing any harm."

"Are you afraid to die?"

"Yes, I am."

"But *why* are you afraid to die?"

"Because I am a sinner, and I know that God is angry with me for my sins."

"Would you be afraid to die, if you knew that your sin, which is the sting of death, were taken away?"

"No, of course not.'

"The Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the sting of death. He died for your sins, and for my sins. He stood in our place, and bore all the penalty that a just and holy God is bound to inflict on us for our sins. If you accept him as your Saviour, and look to him in simple faith, your sins are blotted out, and you may say with St. Paul,—'O, death where is thy sting? O, grave where is thy victory?'"

Thus the door was opened and the visit of the wasp gave the minister an opportunity of speaking to his friend on the forbidden subject. He went on and preached Jesus to the sick man. And God blessed what he said. The squire listened eagerly to him. He was led to true repentance for his sins, and to exercise faith in Jesus as his Saviour. And when he came to die, as he did not long after, he was able to take up good old Simeon's words and say,—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

In this story we see what the effect of seeing Jesus was on a dying man in England, not long

ago. In the case of Simeon we see what the effect of seeing Jesus was on him, in the land of the Bible, nineteen hundred years ago. And seeing Jesus has the same effect now, on people in all lands. Just one more illustration. This is from an English missionary in India:

"Our station," says the missionary, "was on the borders of one of the largest jungles in India. One day a very rough-looking man, of whom we had some knowledge, and who was employed as a buffalo or cow driver in the jungle, came to our house, bringing with him a little girl, about eight or nine years old.

"He said, 'This is my daughter, and I want you, if you please, to take her into your mission. I have given up worshiping idols. I have learned something of the religion of Jesus, and I want my child to learn it, too.'

"We took her in. She appeared like a very unpromising scholar. She was ragged and filthy, and seemed as dull and stupid as the cattle she had helped to drive. The entire change of life, at first, was hard for her to bear. But she soon began to feel great interest in the exercises of the school, and the services of the chapel. Before a year had passed away it was evident that a great change had taken place in her.

She was neat and tidy in her dress and ways; and gentle, and loving in her temper and manner.

"About that time she came to me and expressed an earnest desire to be baptized. She understood well what it meant, and gave good evidence of being a Christian. But still I said, perhaps she had better wait awhile. Her reply was,—'I am not strong; I may not have long to live, and I want to be able to say I am a Christian before I die.'

"She was baptized by the name of Jane. Not long after, she came one day to ask if she might go and visit her people. It was a long way off—a journey of several days to where they lived. When asked why she wished to go so far, her answer was,—'They know nothing of Jesus, and I wish to tell them what a Saviour I have found in him. My grandmother is old. She cannot live long. I want to tell her about Jesus before she dies. There is a messenger going from here to-morrow. He says he will take care of me. Please let me go, and in fourteen days I will be back again.'

"We let her go. True to her word, at the close of the fourteenth day after her departure, she returned.

"As she entered my study, with her face all beaming with joy, she exclaimed:—'I was just in time. I'm so glad I went.'

"'Just in time for what?' I asked.

"'Just in time to save grandma. She only lived three days after I got there. But I told her all about Jesus. I prayed with her, and read to her out of my Testament. Before she died she said,—'I believe in Jesus.' So I know she has gone to heaven. Oh, I'm so glad I went.'

"Not long after this she was taken sick herself. A little while before she died, I said to her,—'Are you happy, Jane?'

"'Oh! yes; joy! joy!' was her answer.

"'Are you afraid to die, Jane?'

"'Oh, no; I am going to be with Jesus! Joy! joy!' These were the last words she uttered."

Thus we have seen what the effect of seeing Jesus was on good old Simeon; on the English squire, and on the poor jungle girl in India.

What Simeon saw in Jesus was—*salvation—light—glory.* The effect of what he saw was that *he was enabled to die in peace.*

May God enable all of us *so* to see Jesus with the eye of faith, that we may be able to take up

Simeon's words, and say,—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Jesus Stills the Tempest on the Sea of Galilee

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.—*St. Luke viii: 22–25.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Such a tempest as is here described is no unusual occurrence on the Sea of Galilee, the peculiar depression of whose surface, and the resultant and rapid evaporation, explain the exceptional suddenness and violence of the storms which sweep down upon the lake from the cooler uplands of Gadara and Naphtali, and from Lebanon.

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

THE visit of the wise men was one of the wonderful things that happened in honor of our Saviour's birth. St. Matthew is the only one of the Evangelists who says anything about this interesting incident. What he tells us respecting it, we find in the second chapter of his gospel, from the first to the twelfth verse. We call these men—"the wise men." In the Greek Testament they are called—Magi. This is a name that was applied in the eastern countries to a class of learned men, who spent their time principally in studying the stars, and other matters of natural science. We find men of this class spoken of in the book of Daniel as "the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the wise men." Dan. ii: 2, v: 7, 15.

We are told that these wise men, or Magi, came to Jerusalem to find out where Christ, "the King of the Jews," was to be born; for,

they said, that in their own country, far away in the East, they had seen a star, which they called "his star," or the star which was sent to tell them that he was born; and now, they wanted to know where the new-born King was to be found, that they might go and worship him.

We know it to be a fact, because it is mentioned by some of the principal writers of that day that there was then a very general expectation prevailing among different nations that a great king was about to be born among the Jews, who was to be a blessing to the world.

Balaam, of whom we read in the book of Numbers, and who lived nearly fifteen hundred years before Christ, had written a prophecy about this expected king. In speaking of him, he used this language:—"There shall come a *star* out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Num. xxiv: 17. This may have had something to do with this widespread expectation. And then Daniel had prophesied of Christ's coming about this time. Some of the Jews were found among all the principal nations of the earth. Wherever they went they took their scriptures with them, and so these prophecies would be known among the wise and

learned men of different nations. And this, no doubt, had a good deal to do with the spreading abroad of the idea that some great king, or deliverer was about to come into the world.

And then it was a common opinion in those days that when kings or great men were born, some peculiar appearance of the stars or other heavenly bodies would take place in honor of their birth. The wise men said they had seen a star in their own eastern country, which they called "his star," that is the star of this new-born King. When they saw this star, they felt sure that the Great Deliverer, for whom the world was waiting, had been born; and they came to Jerusalem to inquire about the place of his birth, that they might go and worship him.

When Herod, the king, heard this, he sent and called for the chief priests and scribes, and inquired of them where Christ, the promised King and Saviour was to be born.

"And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." Micah v: 2. Then the wise men went to Bethlehem; and the star

appeared to them again, and led them to the infant Saviour. And when they came to the place where Jesus was, they worshiped him, and presented their gifts to him, and then went back to their own country.

And this is really all that we know of these wise men. A great many things have been said about them, but we cannot be sure that they are true. It has been said that there were three of them; that they were kings; that their names were Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar; that when they knelt beside the manger, the babe reached out his hands over their heads and blessed them; that Mary, his mother, gave them a linen band in which Jesus had been wrapped; that on going away, they found they could work miracles with this linen band; that they afterwards became preachers of the gospel, and went as missionaries to the heathens, and finally were put to death as martyrs; that their bones were gathered up, and taken to the city of Cologne; and now, in the great cathedral of that city, may be seen a silver case adorned with precious stones, in which are three skeletons, said to be those of these three kings, with their skulls crowned with diamonds, and their names written in rubies. But these statements are all

fables. No one can prove any of them. All that we know about these wise men is the simple statement that we find in St. Matthew's gospel. They came seeking the Saviour. And this is what we should all be doing. Let us look at the wise men in this character—as men who were seeking Jesus. We shall find their example both interesting and instructive, when we consider it in this light. Now let us try to answer this question:—*What sort of seekers were these wise men?*

And when we come to look at them carefully, we shall find *five* things about them as seekers of the Saviour, which will teach us very valuable lessons. Each of these five things may be expressed in a single word, so that we may wrap this whole subject up in five words, that we can easily carry away with us, and remember as long as we live.

Now we may begin by saying that these wise men were—EARNEST SEEKERS—*of Jesus.*

When we see persons doing anything, we can tell, in a moment, whether they are in earnest about it or not. These men showed that they were in earnest in seeking Jesus, by the way in which they set about it. Suppose that when they saw that wonderful star and learned from

it that the promised Saviour was born, they had remained quietly at home, and merely sent some of their servants to inquire about him. This would have showed some *interest* in the matter, but it would not have showed any earnestness. But *this* was *not* what they did. *They came themselves* to see about it. They felt that it was a matter of too much importance to trust to others. And it was a long journey they had to take. We cannot tell exactly how long this journey was, because we do not know just where they came from. Some suppose they came from Arabia. This was a country to the southeast of Jerusalem. If it was from Arabia that they came, then they must have traveled over that dreary desert, through which the Israelites had to journey in coming from Egypt to Canaan. Some suppose that they came from Persia, or from Chaldea, the country in which Abraham was born, and from which he went out at God's command to dwell in the land of Canaan. If this was so, then their journey was longer still. It must have taken them at least several months to come from there to Jerusalem, and then return. And not only would it take up a great deal of *time* to make this journey, but it would require them to spend a great deal

of money, and to go through a great deal of toil, fatigue, and danger.

Now if these wise men looked upon the infant Christ as an ordinary king, then there was no reason why they should have been so earnest in seeking him. They had much better have stayed at home, and have saved their money and the trouble they were at. They would deserve to have been called *foolish* men, instead of wise men.

But if they knew the value of their souls; if they knew that these souls were lost and ruined by sin; if they knew that this new-born king had come to save their souls, and that he was the only one who could save them—and I have no doubt that this was the case—*then*, by their earnestness in seeking Jesus, they showed that they were indeed, "*wise* men." It was worth that long journey, with all the money it cost, and all the toil and danger it involved, to seek this Saviour.

The old proverb says,—"Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing *well*." But there is nothing in the world so worth doing as seeking the salvation of our souls. And when we begin to do this, we should do it well. This means that we should be in earnest about it. This was the

case with these wise men. They were earnest seekers of Jesus.

And we should be earnest in this work, too. If we have not sought Jesus as our own Saviour, we should do it at once; and we should do it *earnestly*. This is what our Saviour himself meant, when he said:—"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God." Matt. vi: 33. What he intends by the word—*first*—here, is, that we should seek him, and his salvation, *before* we seek anything else; and that we should seek it more earnestly than we seek anything else. And if our own souls are saved, through faith in Christ, then we should be earnest in seeking to save others. Let us look at one or two examples of earnestness. We have a good illustration of earnestness in the blind man whom Jesus healed.

He was sitting by the wayside begging. He heard the noise of the passing crowd. "What's the matter?" was his inquiry. Some one said —"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." The poor man had heard of the wonderful works of Jesus. He had faith in the power of Jesus, and had made up his mind that if ever he had a chance to get near him, he would ask him to open his eyes. And now the time has come. Jesus is

passing. This is the golden opportunity for him. He resolves to improve it. He cries,—"Jesus, thou Son of David! have mercy on me!" The people around try to stop him from crying, but in vain. The more they try to stop him, the louder he cries—"Jesus, thou Son of David! have mercy on me." Jesus hears him. He calls him, and opens his eyes, and sends him away rejoicing. The blind man was an earnest seeker.

"The Cottage on Fire." The family of a peasant, in England, were seated in their cottage one day, waiting for supper, when a fire began to burn in the thatched roof of their cottage. They knew nothing of it, and were quietly talking together. A neighbor saw it, and went to tell them of it. He was a slow, quiet sort of a man who never could be roused to earnestness in anything. He began a long, dull talk to them about the danger of fire, and how dreadful it is to be burned out of house and home. In the midst of his long speech, another neighbor rushed in, and striking his hands together, with the utmost earnestness, exclaimed:—"Fire! fire! your house is on fire. Get out directly, or you'll be burned to death."

This man was in earnest, as he ought to have been, under the circumstances.

"Praying Earnestly." Here is what a little boy, only five years old, said about his prayers:

One morning at breakfast he was uncommonly quiet. After awhile, he said,—"Mamma, I've found out what makes me such a bad boy."

"And what is it, my son?" asked his mother, surprised at the suddenness of his remark.

"It's because I haven't prayed my prayers. I haven't prayed them with my heart, and so I've been getting bad all the time. But this morning I thought about it in bed. And when I got up, I prayed my prayers. I prayed earnestly from my heart. I am sure Jesus will hear me, and help me be a better boy." That little fellow was an earnest seeker of Jesus. He was like the wise men in this respect. Let us all try to be *earnest seekers.*

We may take a second look at these wise men, and we see that they were—PERSEVERING SEEKERS.

They expected, no doubt, when they came to Jerusalem to find the people there all greatly interested in the matter about which they had come so far to seek for information. If they had found the inhabitants of Jerusalem so taken up with this subject that they could think and

speak of nothing else, it would have seemed to these wise men to be the most natural thing in the world. But, instead of this, how different was the state of things they found on arriving at Jerusalem! Nobody there knew anything of the birth of Christ. Nobody talked of it, or seemed to care anything about it. This must have appeared very strange to them. It must have disappointed them greatly. The wonder is that they did not turn round, and go directly home, when they found how utterly indifferent the people of Jerusalem were to the birth of their Great King. But these wise men were not to be so easily discouraged. If they had not been very earnest in their seeking, they would, no doubt, have gone back at once. But earnest seekers after Jesus will always be persevering seekers. It was so with these wise men. They knew very well what they were about. They felt the unspeakable importance of what they had come to seek. And no difficulties, or discouragements, could turn them aside from this purpose. Whatever others might do, they had made up their minds to go on, and persevere in seeking Jesus till they found him. We cannot but admire this perseverance. But we should not be satisfied with *admiring* it merely. The

thing for us to do, is to *imitate* it. We should persevere like them in seeking Jesus for ourselves, and then we should persevere in trying to get others to seek him.

Let us look at one or two examples of perseverance.

"The Syro-Phœnician Woman." This is a New Testament example of perseverance. We have the account of it in Matt. xv: 21-28. A woman came to Jesus one day, seeking him, not for herself, but for her daughter. This woman was a Gentile. When she first began to call for the help of Jesus, he seemed to take no notice of her. Then the disciples begged him to send her away. She was not discouraged, but kept on calling to him. Then he told her that he had not been sent to the Gentiles, but only to the Jews. This would have discouraged many a seeker; but this woman was not discouraged. She persevered, and still kept praying to him. Then Jesus told her that it was not right to take the children's bread—meaning the Jews—and give it to the dogs, that is the Gentiles. Now, most persons would have been utterly discouraged by these words, and, in despair, would have given up seeking any further. But it was not so with this woman. She still

persevered. Her reply was,—"Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, and said,—"O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

We must not suppose from this case that Jesus is ever unwilling to hear and answer the prayers of those who seek him. He *seemed* to be so in this case. But then I suppose the reason for it was, that he knew how strong this woman's faith was. He knew she would not be discouraged, or give up seeking him. And he wanted to hold her up to all people as an example of a persevering seeker.

"Perseverance Rewarded." Some years ago, in a manufacturing town in England, a young lady applied to the superintendent of a Sunday-school for a class. He told her he had no vacant classes; but that if she liked to go out and hunt up a class of boys for herself, he would be glad to have her help. She did so, and gathered a class of poor ragged boys. Among these, the worst, and most unpromising boy was one named Bob. The superintendent told these boys to come to his house during the week, and he would get them each a new suit of

clothes. After two or three Sundays, Bob was missing. The teacher went after him. She found that his new clothes were torn and dirty. She invited him back to school. He came. The superintendent gave him a second new suit. After attending once or twice, Bob's place was empty again. Once more the teacher sought him out. She found that the second suit of clothes had gone the same way as the first. She reported the case to the superintendent, saying she was utterly discouraged about Bob, and must give him up.

"Please, don't do that," said the superintendent, "I can't but hope that there is something good in Bob. Try him once more. I'll give him a third suit of clothes if he'll promise to attend regularly." Bob did promise. He received his third suit of clothes. He did attend regularly after that. He got interested in the school. He became an earnest and persevering seeker after Jesus. He found him. He joined the church. He was made a teacher. He studied for the ministry, and the end of the story is, that that discouraging boy—that dirty, ragged, runaway Bob, became the Rev. Dr. Robert Morrisson—the great missionary to China—who translated the Bible into the

A Legion of Devils Cast out of a Man

And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. —*St. Luke viii: 26–33.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Calm succeeds the tempest quelled by Jesus. Dawn breaks upon a scene of unruffled peace, upon the boat rocking at anchor close to the shore, where the fishermen have lighted a fire of driftwood and oleander stems to dry their clothes and cook their morning meal. Jesus retires apart to renew, in rest and communion with God, the physical and spiritual force expended in the conflict of the previous night. Suddenly from one of the tombs which honeycomb the face of the adjacent cliff, rushes forth a raving, naked maniac demon tortured and bleeding from self-inflicted wounds. With half-articulate cries he falls upon his knees, and the frenzied passions that rage within his breast prove obedient as the elements, to the words of "peace be still."

Chinese language, and so, "opened the kingdom of heaven" to the teeming millions of that vast country.

The wise men were persevering seekers.

In the third place they were—SUCCESSFUL SEEKERS.

Soon after they left Jerusalem, on their way to Bethlehem to seek the Saviour, we read that "the star which they saw in the East, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was." Matt. ii: 9.

It is very clear from this that the star which guided the wise men to Jesus was not a common or ordinary star. For it would be utterly impossible for an ordinary star to do what this star did.

Learned men have written a great deal about the different planets that were in the sky at this time, and the great brightness with which they shone. But no matter how great the brightness of those planets might have been, what could that have done to point out to the wise men the particular house they wished to find, and in which the infant Saviour lay? At the time when I was writing this chapter, four of our most beautiful planets were shining in the sky every night. These were Venus, and Jupiter, and Saturn, and Mars. I gazed at them every time I saw them with great delight. But if I

had wished to find out some person who lived several miles from my house, and whose residence I did not know, I could have no help from those planets. They could not have gone before me, as this star did to the wise men, till they came and stood over where the person was that I wished to find. No ordinary star could do this. And so, we know that *this* star which the wise men saw could not have been an ordinary star. It must have been a miraculous star —one sent by God for this special purpose. It must have been like what we call a meteor. It might have been an angel that God sent to guide the wise men, and the angel made use of a bright, shining meteor for this purpose. This star, or meteor, must have moved along quite low down, not much higher than the tops of the houses, so that when it "came to the place where the young child lay," it could stop moving and shedding down its soft, pale light, like a silvery finger could point out the house or place in which the young King lay. And in this way they became successful seekers; they found what they had sought so earnestly, and so perseveringly.

And all who are as earnest and as persevering in seeking Jesus as the wise men were, will be

as successful as they were in finding him. We may be sure of this, because God has promised it. In one place God's promise is given in these words: "They that seek me early *shall find* me." Prov. viii: 17. Now, early seekers here, mean *earnest* seekers; and we see that the promise of finding is given to them. And then in another place the promise is given in this way:—"And ye shall seek me, and shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts." Jer. xxix: 13. But when we do anything "with all our hearts," we are sure to be *earnest* and *persevering*. And so, in this promise, God gives us the assurance that when we are earnest and persevering seekers of him, we shall certainly be successful seekers.

The Ethiopian, of whom we read in Acts viii: 26-40, is a good illustration of a *successful seeker*.

His home was in Africa, down below Egypt. He had traveled all the way from there up to Jerusalem to worship God and get instruction about him. This shows that he was an *earnest seeker* of the truth. He had not gained all the information he desired; and so, as he rode home in his chariot, he was reading the scriptures to try and get more knowledge about the way of

salvation. This shows that he was a *persevering seeker*. Most persons would have waited till they reached home before reading the Bible any more. But this man was too anxious and earnest to wait. At home he was a seeker. At Jerusalem, where he had been, he was a seeker.

And now, as he rode along on his journey, he was a seeker, still. And those who seek Jesus in this way, will always be successful seekers; they will be sure to find him.

It was so with this Ethiopian. God sent Philip, the Evangelist, to help him to find what he was seeking. Philip came. He rode in the chariot with him. He found him reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, without knowing what it meant. Then Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him—Jesus. The man listened eagerly. He believed what he heard. He found Jesus in Philip's sermon. He received him as his Saviour; was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing. Earnest and persevering seekers of Jesus will always be successful seekers. It was so with the Ethiopian. It was so with the wise men. And it will be so with all who seek him in this way.

Let us take another look at these wise men, and now we see them to be—LIBERAL—*seekers.*

We read that after they had found Jesus, and had kneeled down and worshiped him, they "*opened their treasures*, and presented unto him gifts—gold and frankincense, and myrrh."

We all know what gold is. Nothing need be said about this. Frankincense and myrrh were two fragrant gums obtained from trees that grow in Arabia and other parts of the East. These gums were very valuable, and were much employed in making the incense used by the priests in the services of the temple. They were also used for many other purposes.

The wise men did not make these gifts or offerings as a price or payment for any benefits they had received from the infant Saviour whom they had been permitted to worship. They only made these offerings to show how thankful they were for the privilege of seeing and worshiping the Saviour whom they had come so far to seek.

No doubt they expressed their thankfulness with their lips as they bowed down in solemn worship before the new-born King and Saviour. But they felt that this was not enough. They felt that they must make an offering to him of the best things they had. And so they "opened

their treasures," and gave him freely of what those treasures contained.

And we should follow their example in this respect, too. If we find Jesus as the wise men did, it will lead us to "open our treasures." It will make us know and feel that our money, our property, or whatever makes up our earthly treasures, belongs to God, and not to ourselves. These things are not *ours*, but *his*. He lends them to us to use for him. And when we find him as our Saviour; when we become Christians, if we are true Christians, we shall follow the example of these wise men. We shall "open our treasures, and present our offerings" of the very best and choicest things that we have. We shall feel ourselves to be his servants and stewards, and shall wish to use all that we have for the honor and glory of his blessed name. The religion of the wise men made them liberal in using their means, and if our religion do not have this effect upon us, there must be something wrong about it.

"Baptized Pocket-Book." A new convert was about to be received into the communion of a Baptist church by immersion. Before going into the water he was told to remove his pocket-book. "No, no," said he, "let it alone. I *want*

my pocket-book to be baptized, too." He meant to say that he wished to use his money for the cause of Christ. And this is what we should all do. If we have been successful seekers of the blessed Saviour, we ought to be liberal seekers.

God promises to bless those who like these wise men, "open their treasures" and give of their means for doing good to their fellow-creatures, and for the glory of his name.

"The Consecrated Diamonds." The Princess Eugenia, of Sweden, was a devoted Christian lady, and very liberal. She had used up all the money she could control, in doing good in various ways.

Still, in visiting among the poor, she found a number of sick persons who never could be cured, but who could be made comfortable if they only had a hospital home. She wished to establish a home for incurables. But her money was all gone. It had been used up in doing good in other ways. She said to herself, What shall I do to get money for this home? There seemed to be no way of getting this money. At last she thought of a casket of very valuable diamonds that belonged to her. She said to herself,—"*May I not sell my diamonds?*" She asked her brother, the king, about it. He

consented. The diamonds were sold. The hospital was built. It was kept full of patients. With them this noble princess spent much of her time, talking and praying with them, and trying to lead them to Jesus. Among these was an old woman, who was very ignorant, and had been very wicked. The princess had prayed and labored much over this woman, and was very anxious to see her a Christian. But nothing seemed to make any change in her.

On one occasion the princess had to be absent for some weeks. She was going round among the patients saying good-bye. The matron pointed to this old woman, and said—"You'll find her greatly changed."

As the princess came up to the bedside of this old woman, now near her end—she was greeted with these sweet words:—"I thank God that 'the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin,' and that he has cleansed mine." As she uttered these words, tears of grateful gladness flowed down her aged cheeks.

And the princess, herself, shed tears of joy when speaking of it to a friend, as she said: "In the tears of that saved soul—*I saw my diamonds again!*" Yes, and how beautiful they must have appeared, as she thus saw them!

One other illustration before we leave this part of our subject. And the lesson which this story illustrates may be thus expressed:

"Giving, God's Way for Getting." Our Saviour said,—"Give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke vi: 38. And Solomon taught the same lesson when he said,—"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Prov. xi: 24. A minister, who was seeking help to build a chapel, called on a gentleman who was both rich and liberal. He heard the minister's story, and gave him a handsome donation. Then turning to his three boys, who were present, and had heard the minister's statement, and had seen what their father gave, he said,—"Now, my dear boys, what will you give to help this good man in his work?" One said, "I'll give all that I've got in my pocket;" which he did. The second said, "I'll give half what I've got in my pocket," and he gave it. The third said, "I'll give nothing." About twenty years passed away. The minister was making a visit to the city where this incident occurred. He had never forgotten it. He inquired about his generous friend, and his family. The gentleman himself

had died, and gone to heaven. But mark now what he found out about those three boys. The eldest, who gave all he had in his pocket, had been greatly prospered, and was a very rich man. The second son, who gave half of what he had, was moderately well off. But the third, who said "I'll give nothing," was so poor that his two brothers had to support him.

The wise men were liberal seekers.

There is one other thing to say about these wise men, and that is, they were—HAPPY SEEKERS.

We read that "when they saw the star, they *rejoiced with exceeding joy!*" Matt. ii: 10. They were happy seekers then, indeed. But it was not anything in the star itself; not what the star *was*, but what the star *did* for them, that made them happy. It led them to Jesus, and finding Jesus made them happy. And this is what the Bible teaches us will always be the case with those who find Jesus. David compares it to the joy a man feels who unexpectedly finds great spoil or treasures. Ps. cxix: 162. Solomon says,—"Happy is the man who findeth wisdom." Prov. iii: 13. But wisdom here is one of the names belonging to Jesus. What he teaches in this passage is, that finding Jesus will

make us happy. And "the joy and gladness, the thanksgiving, and the voice of melody," that we read so much about in the Bible, all refer to the happiness that follows from finding Jesus. There is no happiness in the world like that which those feel who really find Jesus, and know, and love, and trust him as their own precious Saviour. One who has thus been taught to know Jesus, wrote these sweet lines to express the happiness he found in him:

"I've found the pearl of greatest price,
My heart doth sing for joy;
And sing I must, a Christ I have,
O, *what* a Christ have I!

"Christ is my meat, Christ is my drink,
My medicine, and my health;
My peace, my strength, my joy, my crown,
My glory and my wealth.

"Christ is my father and my friend,
My brother and my love;
My head, my hope, my counsellor,
My advocate above."

And if *all this* is found in Jesus, we may well speak of those who find him as happy.

Let us look at some incidents which show us how happy those are who truly find Christ.

"Singing all the Time." A little Sunday-school boy was badly wounded at a spinning-mill, in Dundee, Scotland. After being taken home, he lingered for a few days and died.

His mother came to the mill to see the boy's teacher, and tell him about his death. The teacher asked her how he died.

"He was singing all the time," said she.

"Tell me what he was singing?" said the teacher.

"He was singing,—

> "'O, the Lamb, the loving Lamb,
> The Lamb of Calvary;
> The Lamb that was slain, but has risen again,
> And intercedes for me.'"

And the meaning of this was that *that* poor boy had found Jesus, and this had made him happy.

"The Little Irish Missionary." A gentleman from England was visiting a faithful minister of Christ, in Ireland, not long ago. One day they went out for a walk. As they went on, a ragged-looking Irish boy was seen coming down the road. "See," said the minister, "here comes one of my missionaries." As the lad drew near, the gentleman saw that he had a book under his arm.

"Well, my boy," said he, "are you a missionary?"

"Yes, your honor."

"And what do you teach the people?"

"I teach them—

"'There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains,'

—your honor."

"You seem to be very poor," said the gentleman.

"Sure, and your honor's mistaken," replied the boy; "for indade I'm very rich."

"What riches have you?"

"Sure, then I have the unsearchable riches of Christ. And more nor that, I am an heir of God, and a joint heir with our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Anything more?"

"Yes, your honor, I have an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me."

And the meaning of it all was, this boy had found Jesus; and finding him had made him happy.

"Blessed Are They That Mourn." Mr. Johnson, the superintendent of a mission-school, was

locking up the door of the school-house one Sunday night, when he saw a little girl, ten or twelve years old, standing in the doorway, crying bitterly. He asked her into the school-room.

"What's wrong with you, my child?" he asked.

"Please, sir, everything's wrong with me, and I just wish I was dead," she said, as she burst into tears.

The child was a stranger to him, so he spoke kindly to her, and asked her to tell him her story. It was this:

Her father had been dead for years; her mother died a week ago, and now she was grieved to think how often she had disobeyed her mother.

"O, sir," she said, "when I came in here to-night and heard you telling about Jesus dying on the cross, I just thought it was all my fault; and I've been so bad that he will never forgive me."

Mr. Johnson told her how Christ came to save sinners, and how ready he is to pardon, and save, and bless all who believe in him. He talked and prayed with her, and asked her to come to his house the next day.

Jesus Healeth a Paralytic

And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house. . . . And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts. . . . And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? . . . But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy.) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.—*St. Mark ii: 1–12.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

The difficulty of fully understanding the passage in St. Mark's gospel, which forms the subject of this picture, disappears on examining the extremely primitive construction of the roofs of many Oriental houses. A fire in the town of Tiberius provided me with the unexpected opportunity of witnessing the actual breaking-up of a roof; this, for lack of water, being resorted to as a means of smothering the conflagration. The roof, to which access was obtained, as usual, by an outside stair, consisted of a few beams inserted in the outer walls, upon which branches of trees and palm-leaves were roughly laid; the final covering of a few inches of beaten earth providing scant foothold for that "grass upon the house tops which withereth before it groweth up."

At the time appointed, she met him with a smile, and said,—"I see it all now, sir. I have put myself in the hands of Jesus, and feel happy."

Mr. Johnson got her a nice situation with a good Christian lady. On the following Sunday she came to school. On coming up to Mr. Johnson, she pointed to one of the illuminated texts on the wall, and said,—"Please, sir, read that." He said,—"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

"That's me, sir," she cried joyfully; "that's me! Jesus took away my mother and my home, and when I mourned, he gave me another home, and bade me follow my mother to heaven. And when I was sorry for my sins, he washed them away. Now I am happy. So when I saw that sweet text, I couldn't help telling you, sir,—"That's me! that's me!"

This poor child had found Jesus, and it made her happy. And so it was with the wise men, who came seeking Jesus. Remember what sort of seekers they were. They were earnest seekers; persevering seekers; successful seekers; liberal seekers. Let us seek Jesus as they did, and then we shall be happy, too.

THE BOY CHRIST

NOW there are two incidents in the life of our Saviour closely connected with the visit of the wise men, of which we have last spoken. These are the slaughter of the little children in Bethlehem and its borders, and the flight into Egypt. When the wise men came to Jerusalem to inquire about the place of Christ's birth, they were told that he was to be born in Bethlehem. Before they left Jerusalem to go and seek him, Herod asked them to come back and tell him where this royal child was to be found, that he might come and worship him also. He was not speaking the truth when he said this. The fact was that it alarmed him very much to hear about the birth of a child who was to be king of the Jews. And if he could have found out where that child was, he intended, not to go and worship him, but to send and kill him. God knew this. To him "all

hearts are open, all desires known, and from him, no secrets are hid." And when the wise men had found the young king, and had worshiped him, God told them not to go back to Herod, but to return to their own country another way.

And when Herod saw that they were not coming back to tell him where the young child was, he thought he would make sure of the death of the child, so he sent some of his soldiers to go to Bethlehem and kill all the young children who had been born in that town during the last two years. And if Joseph and Mary had remained there, with their child, he would most certainly have been killed. But God took care that this should not happen. He sent an angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream by night. The angel told him what Herod was going to do; and in order to preserve the life of the infant Saviour, he told him to take the young child and his mother, and go down into the land of Egypt, and stay there until they should hear of the death of Herod.

Joseph did this; and so, although Herod had his cruel order carried out, and "the slaughter of the innocents" did take place in Bethlehem, and many a mother's heart there was wrung

with anguish at seeing her darling little one butchered before her eyes, yet Jesus was saved, that he might save the world. It would be interesting to pause and speak more fully about these incidents connected with the infant days of our blessed Lord, but there are so many more important events to be considered that we must leave these and pass on.

The next period in the life of our Saviour, of which we are now to speak, is the longest period in it. It reaches from his return from Egypt, till the time when he was baptized and entered on his public ministry. This one period takes in thirty years of the life of Christ leaving only three years and a half to make up all the rest of it.

We may call this period—*The Boyhood of Christ.*

When Herod the king died, God sent an angel to Joseph, in Egypt, to tell him the news; and also to direct him to return to his own country. He obeyed the angel's word, and came back to the land of Israel, with Mary his wife, and their child. It seems that he was going back to Bethlehem, where he had lived before; but hearing that Archelaus, the son of Herod, who like his father, was a very bad man, had

been made king in Jerusalem, he was afraid to go there, and concluded to go to Nazareth, and make *that* his home. And, in this way it happened that "the boyhood of Christ," extending over the first thirty years of his life, was spent at Nazareth. This led to his being called "Jesus of Nazareth." St. Matthew says,—this was done in order "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene." Matt. ii: 23. These exact words are not found in any of the Old Testament prophets. But in different places they speak of Christ as one whose condition in life was to be very humble and despised. And this is what Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Nazarene, means.

It was my privilege some years ago to travel through that country. In a volume containing a sketch of those travels, published by the American Sunday-School Union, and called—"Illustrated Rambles in Bible-Lands," Nazareth is thus spoken of:

"We spent a Sunday at Nazareth, resting in our encampment near the well, outside the city. This place is so full of sacred associations connected with the early life of Jesus as to make a sojourn here particularly interesting. That Sabbath, spent in the youthful home of our

Great Redeemer, will never be forgotten. In the afternoon we had a delightful union service, in a large tent, in which a number of other travellers took part.

"At the close of the afternoon we took a walk through the town of Nazareth. The population is about four thousand. The town lies in a valley on the side of a hill, answering exactly to the description given by St. Luke (iv: 29) of the angry crowd that broke up the synagogue service, and 'led Jesus to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.'

"After rambling through the town, we climbed up the hill, or ridge of hills behind it, so as to get from above a view of Nazareth and of the country around. This ridge is about five hundred feet high. The descent, immediately below the crest of the hill, is so steep, that it would not be difficult to find more places than one, from which, if a person were thrown over, he would have a headlong fall."

We sat down on "the brow of the hill," at the quiet sunset hour, to meditate on the scene before us, so rich in hallowed associations. There was a feeling of intense reality in everything around us. The Nazareth of to-day

occupies, no doubt, the same locality with the Nazareth of nineteen hundred years ago, when Jesus was there. Over these very fields, the boy Jesus had played with his companions. Up this very hill, doubtless, he had often climbed. Where we were sitting, he may often have sat, and gazed on the same landscape spread out in its beauty before us. It was pleasant indeed to linger on such a spot, and indulge in such thoughts.

But, apart from these associations, the view from that hill, behind Nazareth, is very interesting. It is one of the most varied and extensive that Palestine affords. It overlooks the beautiful plain of Esdraelon. It takes in the snowy-peak of Hermon, the rounded summit of Tabor, the long dark ridge of Carmel, and beyond it, the white strand of the Mediterranean.

In the midst of this scene of beauty Jesus spent his days, from the time of his infancy until he was thirty years old. How strange it seems that we have no history of those years! We long to know more about the boyhood of Christ. But there is nothing with which to satisfy this longing. Only one anecdote of his boyhood is told. This is his visit to the temple, when he was twelve years old. Of this we will

have occasion to speak by and by. This is so full of interest that it only makes us wish that more such incidents had been told of him. But they have not been told. With this one exception, the early life of our Saviour is passed over in entire silence.

Let us never forget that when Jesus came into our world, to do the most important work that ever was done in it,—to teach and to save the world,—he spent thirty years of his life in private, and only three and a half in public. There are many lessons that God intended to teach us by this strange fact. But there is one that we should remember above all the rest; it is this,—*The importance of home duties.* The apostle Paul teaches us that we must—"Learn first to show *piety* at *home.*" I. Tim. v: 4. Jesus spent thirty years of his life in "first showing piety at home," before he began to show piety in public. And here is an example for every boy and girl to follow. *This* is the great lesson that comes to us from the boyhood and early manhood of Christ.

Other histories of the early years of our Saviour's life have been written; but they are very different from the simple history given us in the Bible. They are full of stories about the

marvelous things said to have happened to him; but of course they are not true. Here are some specimens of these stories:

In giving an account of the flight into Egypt, these stories tell us how dragons came and bowed to him; how lions and leopards came and worshiped him; how the roses of Jericho blossomed wherever he went; how the palm trees bowed down before him that his parents might gather the fruit they bore; and how, when he entered Egypt, all the idols in the land fell from their pedestals, and were broken in pieces.

And then in describing his life in Nazareth, similar stories are told. They say that, one day, when his father was doing some work, as a carpenter, he cut a board too short; but Jesus took hold of it, and stretched it out to the length that was needed, as easily as you or I could stretch a piece of India-rubber. They say that sometimes he would make little birds out of clay, and then when he clapped his hands, they would turn into real live birds and fly away; at other times, when playing with his companions, he would turn them into kids, and then, after awhile, turn them into boys again.

How different from all this, is the simple history of the boyhood of Christ which we have in the gospels!

And the question we have now to ask is this: —*What sort of boy was Jesus?*

We can answer this question from what we are told about him in the New Testament. And the whole answer may be given in *four* words.

And in answering this question, the first to say is, that—Jesus was a—POOR—*boy.*

We always reckon a boy to be rich or poor according to what his father is. And we must judge of Jesus, when he was a boy, in the same way. His father and mother we know were both poor. They were the descendants of King David, indeed, and yet they were so poor that when they went up to Bethlehem to be taxed, they could not afford to hire a room to stay in, but had to seek shelter in a stable, when the infant Saviour was born. And when he was forty days old, and they went up to Jerusalem, to present him in the temple, according to the Jewish law, they were too poor to buy a lamb for the offering, but had to be satisfied with two young pigeons. And this was their condition all through the years of Christ's boyhood.

They were not so poor as to be in actual want of food; not so poor as to have to beg their daily bread. Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, was a working man—a mechanic. He earned enough money to support his family. He provided them with a home; he clothed them, and fed them. And yet it was the home of the poor in which Jesus lived. It was the food of the poor that Jesus ate; and the clothing of the poor that Jesus wore. And so, we may well speak of Jesus as a poor boy. He was the Son of a poor laboring man. But this did not just happen so. It was not because it could not be helped, and that he was obliged to be poor. No, for he had made the world and all things in it. He might have stood on the top of the hill which overlooked the city of Nazareth, in which he lived, and stretching out his hands towards the four quarters of the globe, might have said,—"The silver and the gold everywhere are mine. The cattle upon the thousand hills are mine. The earth is mine—and the fulness thereof." Of course then, he might have lived very differently, if he had chosen to do so. But he chose, when a boy, to be a poor boy. And one reason why he did this, was to teach us not to think less of persons, simply because they

are poor. Jesus put honor on honest, industrious poverty, by choosing himself to be poor. If we are poor, let us never forget that Jesus was poor. He knows how the poor feel. He remembers how he felt when he was poor.

"Sympathy with the Poor." There was a good Christian lawyer once, who was very kind to the poor. He was so ready to help them, that he was called, "*the poor man's friend.*" One morning a poor, half-naked beggar was found upon his door-step, who had passed the night there, shivering in the cold. The next night he made the beggar sleep in his bed, and he, himself, lay upon the door-step, that he might learn, from experience, what the sufferings of the poor are. And Jesus came down from heaven, with all its blessedness and glory, and lived as a poor boy, and a poor man, that he might have sympathy with the poor, and know how to feel for them.

Jesus was a *poor* boy.

But in the second place, Jesus was a—THOUGHTFUL—*boy.*

There can be no doubt that he was happy and cheerful, and played pleasantly with other boys of his own age whom he knew in Nazareth. But, then, there can be little doubt that

he knew very early in life about his wonderful birth, and the great purpose for which he had been sent into the world. We cannot suppose that his mother would fail to tell him of the angel's visit to her before he was born, and of the song which was sung by "a multitude of the heavenly host," who appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem on the night in which he was born. And when these strange things were told to him they must have had a wonderful effect upon him. He could not help thinking about them. And we can easily imagine how he would often go away by himself into the woods around Nazareth, or on the hill-top behind the city, and think over all the marvelous things the angels had said of him; and pray to his Father in heaven to prepare him for the great work he was to do. All this must have helped to make him very serious and very thoughtful.

The Jewish parents were very careful in teaching their children the words of God's holy book. This was the law given by Moses:—"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when

Jesus Healeth a Woman in the Crowd

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.—*St. Luke viii: 4; St. Mark v: 22–34.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

The buttresses and arches which span the narrow street, the overhanging latticed windows, and the tiny shops, are characteristic of the western Asiatic city; while the vaulted corn market to the right suggests the adaptation for the present subject of the "Suk-el-Bizâr" of Jerusalem.

thou risest up." Deut. vi: 7. In this way Jesus would be taught about the Messiah, of whom all the prophets had spoken; and then the great thought must have come into his mind, very early in life, that *he* was the person referred to by these prophets. We cannot tell how strangely these thoughts must have made him feel.

Nothing is mentioned in the New Testament about the school-days of Jesus. But we know that the Jews were very particular about the education of their children. They used to say, that—"a town in which there is no school must perish." They said that "Jerusalem was destroyed because the education of the children was neglected." There can be no doubt, I think, that Jesus did go to school, and receive the ordinary education given to poor boys like himself. Some persons think that he never went to school; because afterwards, when he became famous as a preacher, the Jews said:—"*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned.*"

But this does not mean that he never went to school at all. It only means, as we should say, that he never went to college; he never went to one of their great schools, or received such an education as is given to those who are to be public speakers.

But now let us look for a moment at the only incident given us of the early life of Jesus, and which shows us clearly what a thoughtful boy he was.

This incident we find in the second chapter of St. Luke, from the forty-first to the fifty-second verses. Here we are told that when he was twelve years old, his parents took him with them, as they went up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover. This festival, you know, was kept in memory of that most wonderful night, in their history as a nation, when God delivered them out of Egypt. It was the greatest of all the Jewish festivals. The men among the Jews were required by law to go up to Jerusalem every year and keep this feast. The women might go, if they chose, but were not compelled to do it. But the pious women generally went up with their husbands, as Mary did, in order to show their love for the worship of God. And so, when a Jewish boy grew to be twelve years old, he generally went up with his father to Jerusalem to keep this great festival. There was no law requiring this to be done, but it had gotten to be the custom. The Jews believed that it was at this age that Moses, the great law-giver, was taken from his mother to

live with Pharaoh's daughter, who had found him in the ark of bulrushes, floating on the river Nile, and who had adopted him as her own son. They believe, too, that it was at this same age that

> "Little Samuel awoke,
> And heard his Maker's voice."

And this belief led them to the practice of taking their boys up to the temple when they were twelve years old. Then the boy was called "a son of the law;" and he began from this time to wear what they called—phylacteries, which were pieces of parchment having some of the words of scripture written on them. And so according to this custom, when Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him with them to Jerusalem when they made their annual visit there to keep the Passover.

This must have been a very interesting event in the life of the youthful Saviour. It was probably the first time he had been away from Nazareth since he was an infant,—the first time he had ever seen anything more of the world than he could see from the top of the hill which overlooked that city. It was an interesting journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem. The country

was hilly. Those hills are all bare now, but they were covered with trees then, making the landscape everywhere very beautiful. It must all have been new to the human sight of Jesus, and no doubt he enjoyed it greatly. And when he came near Jerusalem and got his first view of that celebrated and sacred place, and especially when he came to see the temple and enter it for the first time, how much the feelings of the thoughtful boy must have been stirred within him!

Great multitudes of people from all over the country came up to Jerusalem at this feast, and the city was always very much crowded at this time. Joseph and Mary spent eight days there attending to all the religious services of the Passover. If you wish to know what these services were, you will find a full account of them given in the twelfth chapter of Exodus.

At last the feast is ended. The solemn services connected with it are all over. The strangers in Jerusalem are ready to leave. The visitors from Nazareth are all acquainted with each other. They agree to travel together as a sort of caravan. This will secure them pleasant company and mutual protection. They start on their homeward journey. Jesus is not with

his parents when they leave Jerusalem. But they have probably seen him not long before with the young people belonging to their company, and so they feel easy about him. The travellers journey quietly on till the close of the day. Then they halt, and pitch their tents for the night. Mary expects every moment that her Son will come in, but he does not come. They inquire about him, but get no information. They seek him "among their kinsfolk and acquaintance." But he is not there. No one has seen him. They feel very anxious, and return to Jerusalem seeking him. In this way, two days are spent—one in journeying from Jerusalem, another in journeying back there; and then a third day is spent in seeking him in the city. Here they find him at last, in the temple. This does not mean in the temple proper, where sacrifices were offered and worship presented to God, but in one of the rooms in the courts that surrounded the temple. Here the Jewish Rabbis and teachers were accustomed to meet for the purpose of giving instruction about the law of God to those who desired to receive it.

Full of anxiety, Joseph and Mary enter the door of this room, and pause for a moment to

look round. A company of grave and learned men occupy that room. And there, too, they see their lost Son, whom they are seeking. But what an unexpected position it is in which they find him! He is "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking questions." How Mary's heart must have leapt for joy when she saw the calm, bright face of her thoughtful boy in such company! We read, "and when they saw him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing? And he said,—How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not"—(*i. e.*, did ye not know that)—"I must be about my Father's business?"

Mary's question to our Saviour was intended as a sort of gentle reproof; as if she meant to imply that he ought to have told them he was going to stay behind, or to have asked her permission to do so. The answer of Jesus to his mother was perfectly respectful. It was intended to remind her of what his true character was, and of the important work he had come into the world to do. If Jesus had been only like other boys, his mother might well have felt anxious about him when he was missed. But

knowing all that she did know about him, she ought to have felt perfectly sure that he could not be lost; that no harm could happen to him; and that, wherever he might be, he would certainly "be about his Father's business." But when he said this, we are told that, "they understood not the saying that he spoke unto them." How strange this was! How very dull they must have been!

The fact is, it seems as if the parents of our Lord were beginning to lose faith in what the angels had said about their wonderful child. It may have been that this scene in the temple took place and the words there spoken were addressed to them on purpose to remind them how entirely different from all other boys was this thoughtful boy of theirs. And though we know so little about the early life of Jesus, yet this story of his visit to the temple shows very clearly that even when he was only twelve years old he was thinking and feeling and praying about that great and wonderful work which he came into the world to do.

And so we may well say of Jesus that he was a—*thoughtful boy.*

The next thing to notice about Jesus is, that he was an—OBEDIENT—*boy.*

After the talk with his parents, when they found him in the temple, we read that—"he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and *was subject* unto them." St. Luke ii: 51. This means that he obeyed them. It shows us that he was an obedient boy. This visit occured when he was twelve years old. He remained at Nazareth practising obedience to his parents till he was a full-grown man—thirty years of age. And thus we see that he spent all those years in leaving an example of obedience for young people to follow.

Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus, was a carpenter. Among the Jews every boy was obliged to learn a trade. Jesus learned his father's trade and worked with him as a carpenter. This would not have been surprising if, like other boys, Jesus had never lived anywhere else before he came into our world. This is true of you and me, and all of us. When we were born into our world, that was the very beginning of our life. We never lived anywhere else. But it was not so with Jesus. He had lived before he came into this world. He tells himself, that he had been "in the bosom of the Father," John i: 18; and that he had shared his glory "before the world was."

John xvii: 5. He must have remembered that heavenly home where he had lived with God his Father, "from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Prov. viii: 23. And when he thought of the glory and happiness of that heavenly home, how hard it must have been for him to live in a poor cottage at Nazareth!

When Jesus was in heaven he was there as King, and the angels obeyed him. But when he came into our world, he had to obey, not the angels, but his parents, and they were only poor, feeble, human creatures like ourselves. This must have been hard for him to do. The apostle Paul tells us that "he was made *under the* law." Gal. iv: 4. This means that he was "made," or born, or sent into the world on purpose that he might be obedient to the law.

Suppose that you, or I, had been a king for many years. We had been accustomed to sit on a throne, and wear a crown, and make laws for our subjects to obey. And then suppose that we had to lay aside our crown, and come down from the throne, and become subjects ourselves, and obey the very laws we had made for others. That would be hard. But *that* was what Jesus had to do.

He was bound to obey the word and will of his earthly parents. And through all those long years he went forth to his daily work as an obedient Son. It is supposed that Joseph, his reputed father, died when he was nineteen years old; and, then, after that, Jesus had to work for the support of his mother. O, if we could have seen him, day after day, through all those years, going out in the morning to his work, and coming home at night, weary with his labor; and if we could have known who he was, and what he came into our world for, how strange it would have seemed! Many things about the life of Jesus were strange and wonderful; but one of the most strange and wonderful is, that he should have lived so long as an obedient boy.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he spent only three years and a-half in teaching all the great and important things he had to make known. But before he began this part of his work, he spent *thirty years* in teaching young people everywhere the lesson of obedience. This is the most important lesson for every boy and girl to learn.

"Truthful and Obedient." A company of boys were playing ball. One of them, named

Charley, heard his name called. "That's mother," he cried, instantly throwing down his bat, and picking up his cap and jacket.

"Don't go yet, Charley," said one of the boys. "Let's finish the game."

"I must go right off, this minute—I told mother I'd come whenever she called."

"Make believe you didn't hear!" the boys exclaimed.

"But I *did* hear."

"She'll never know you did."

"But I'd know, and I'm not going to act a lie."

"Let him go," said another of the boys; "you can't do anything with him. He's tied to his mother's apron-strings."

"Yes," said Charley, "and there's where every boy ought to be tied, and in a good hard knot, too."

"I wouldn't be such a baby as to run the minute I was called," said another of the boys.

"I don't call it babyish to keep one's word," said *this* obedient boy, with a beautiful light glowing in his eyes. "I call it manly for a fellow to keep his word with his mother; and if he doesn't keep his word to her, you see if he keeps it to anyone else."

This was noble in Charley. He was following the example of Jesus—the obedient boy. And what Charley said was true. The only one of the Ten Commandments to which God has added a special blessing is the fifth, which requires us to obey our parents.

Here is an illustration of the way in which that blessing is sometimes given. We may call it:

"The Secret of Success." A Christian merchant, who, from being a poor boy, had risen to wealth and honor, was once asked by an intimate friend, to what, under God, he owed his great success in life. His immediate reply was: "*To prompt and steady obedience to my parents.* In the midst of many bad examples of boys of my own age, who would not mind their parents, I was always able, by God's help, cheerfully to obey my father and mother, and I firmly believe that a blessing has, in consequence, followed me all through my life."

Now let us take an opposite example.

"Why Didn't I Mind My Mother?" A gentleman was going to New York once, by rail, from a neighboring town. As the train stopped at one of the stations, he noticed the passengers crowding to the windows of the car. On

looking out he saw a large boy lying on a wheel-barrow. His limbs were crushed and bleeding, and his face bore marks of the greatest agony.

It seemed that he and several of his companions had undertaken to steal a ride on the railroad, by hiding themselves underneath the cars. This poor lad had lost his hold, had fallen under the wheels, and his limbs had been crushed beneath them.

As he was borne along on the wheel-barrow, to be placed in the baggage-car and taken home, he was heard repeating these words, in a most sorrowful tone:

"*Why didn't I mind my mother? Why didn't I mind my mother?*"

It seemed that his mother had warned him against this dangerous and foolish practice. But he refused to mind his mother. He had not learned the lesson of obedience. The consequence was—his limbs were crushed and mangled, and he was left a cripple for life.

I am sure the little girl whose good resolutions are expressed in the following lines, was trying to imitate the example that Jesus set for all young persons, when he lived at Nazareth as the—obedient boy:

"O yes, I will try for the whole of to-day,
To do what they bid me, and mind what they say;
And even before they say what they want,
I'll be careful to do it, and not say—'I can't.'

"If any one teases, I will not be cross,
Nor for something to do need I be at a loss;
I can work in my garden, and play with my brother,
And go little errands to help my dear mother.

"I will not be idle at lessons or work,
Nor disturb busy people with questions or talk;
To be earnest in business, and merry at play,
Is the way to go happily through the whole day.

"Now, if I can keep resolutions like these,
It will make me more happy and good; and will please
Not my parents alone, but my Father above,
Who delighteth in goodness, and kindness, and love."

And so, when we think of Jesus as a boy, let us always remember that he was an—obedient boy.

But, there is one other thing for us to remember, when we think of the boyhood of our blessed Lord, and this is that he was a—PATIENT—*boy.*

He was perfectly willing to wait till the time appointed by his Father in heaven for him to begin his great work had come. If he had not known who he was, and what the work was which he was sent into the world to do, his patience would not have been so surprising.

Resurrection of the Daughter of Jairus

While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.—*St. Mark v: 35–43.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

The maid has "fallen asleep" upon the mattress or quilt which, laid upon the floor, and without other preparation, forms the customary Eastern bed.

But it is plain, from what took place on the occasion of his visit to the temple, when he was only twelve years old, that he knew very well then, who he was, and what he had been sent into the world to do. He understood what his "Father's business" was. He knew how many important lessons he had to teach, and how many mighty miracles he had to perform. He knew there were sick people waiting for him to heal them; and blind men waiting for him to come and open their eyes; and lame, and deaf, and palsied men waiting for him to make them whole, and yet he was patient. He knew there were many persons in distress and sorrow, waiting for him to comfort them. And above all, he knew that there was a world of poor lost sinners going down to death, and waiting for him to come and save them; and *yet he was patient.* He was in no hurry to begin his work, until his Father's time for him to begin it had fully come. Month after month, and year after year, he waited. He "let patience have its perfect work," till he was thirty years of age. *This* was the time which God the Father had appointed for him to begin his work; and he waited patiently till this time came. St. Paul told the Hebrews that—they "had need of

patience." And this is true of us all. It is especially true of all young persons. Boys are in a hurry to be men. Girls are in a hurry to be women. Boys and girls have need of patience. When Jesus was a boy, he was in no hurry. He knew very well that his Father's time was the best time for him to begin his work, and he was patient till that time came. This patience of Jesus was one of the most wonderful things connected with his early life.

And it is a matter of very great importance for us to follow his example in this respect, and learn well this lesson of patience. In working for God, it will save us from a great deal of trouble if we learn to wait patiently till his time for us to begin our work comes. See what an illustration of this we have in the case of Moses. I suppose he knew that the work God wanted him to do was to deliver his people Israel out of Egypt. Moses was not patient as Jesus was. He learned this lesson afterwards; for we are told he became "the meekest man in the earth." But when he was a young man he was not patient. He was in a hurry to begin his work. But he began it forty years too soon. The consequence was that he got into trouble.

He had to give up what he had begun to do, and flee for his life. He hid himself in the wilderness. There he waited for forty years, till God gave him orders to go and do the work he had for him to do.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush. Moses saw that wonderful sight —how the bush burned with fire, and yet was not consumed. God spoke to him from the midst of that bush. He told him that the right time for him to do his work had come. He gave him directions how to do it; and then Moses found no difficulty in doing it. Here we see the importance of patience in beginning our work.

But we need patience in doing our work when it is begun.

"Mrs. Wesley's Patience." Some one said to Mrs. Wesley,—"How can you have the patience to teach the same thing to your child twenty times over?"

"Why," she replied, "if I had said it only nineteen times, and then stopped, I should have lost all my labor. It was the twentieth time that fixed it."

"A Little Girl's Patience." A poor woman had a supply of coal laid at her door by a kind

neighbor. Her little girl came out, with a small fire shovel, and began to take up a shovelful at a time, and carry it to a sort of bin in the cellar. A gentleman going by, stopped to look at her: —"My child," he said, "do you expect to get all that coal in with your little shovel?"

She was confused, and held down her head for a moment, and then answered:—"Yes, sir, if *I work long enough.*"

And then we need patience to make us satisfied with the situation we are placed in. This is what we are taught in the catechism, when told that we "must learn and labor truly to get our own living, and do our duty in *that state of life in which it has pleased God to call us.*" We see this illustrated in the following—*Fable of a Flower.* "Only a flower," said a primrose. "I suppose I am nothing better, and they think this shady place is good enough for me. But I think I'm quite as pretty as many of those in the flower-beds, that have so much more care and sunshine. If I only had the chance, they should soon see that I was worth looking at."

"I think, gardener," said little Nell, "I should like my primrose in a better place; it is not much seen there, and it is so very pretty, and has such fine blossoms."

"They would not be fine long, Miss Nellie," said the gardener, "if they were taken out of the shade."

"Do try it please."

So the primrose plant was carefully removed to a more open and sunny place in the garden. It was very much pleased at first, and put forth as many blossoms as possible to gaze at the sun the better, but they were very weak blossoms and soon began to droop under the sun's heat.

The next day the primrose said to itself,— "O, I wish I were back in my old place again! It's too hot for me here. I can't stand this. I feel faint and thirsty."

"I think you were right, gardener," said Nellie "Though you were so careful not to disturb the root, still, I see the sunshine is not so good for my primrose as the shade."

So the primrose was taken back to its old place. On recovering from the effects of the change, it found itself stronger and wiser. "The gardener who put me in the shade knew best what was good for me," said the primrose. We are all like plants in God's garden, and he knows best where to put us.

And when we think of the boyhood of our Saviour, let us never forget these four words,

and always remember him as the *poor* boy; the *thoughtful* boy; the *obedient* boy, and the *patient* boy.

In the Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter, is a beautiful prayer, and one very proper for us to offer when we think of the example set before us in the boyhood of Christ.

"Almighty God who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that, his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavor ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

THE years of quiet, private life in the history of our Saviour at last are ended. The time has come for him to begin in public the great work he came into our world to do. Now, indeed, as he said, when he was only twelve years old, He "*must* be about his Father's business."

John, the Baptist—his forerunner—has been preaching for about six months. His preaching has stirred the hearts of the Jewish people in a way that had never been known before. He has told them that the long promised Messiah is about to come; and has urged them to repent of their sins, and so be prepared to meet him. The people came out in crowds to hear John preach. St. Matthew tells us:—"Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Ch. iii: 5, 6.

And, while this is going on among those who come to John for baptism, one day, Jesus himself appears. We have no account of his leaving Nazareth. We are not told how he put away his carpenter's tools for the last time. We are not told how he said good-bye to his mother, as he let her know that he was now going to begin his public ministry. But we cannot doubt that he did this. He bids farewell to his mother and to his quiet home in Nazareth. He travels across the country towards Jordan. He comes to John and asks to be baptized. John was glad enough to baptize most of those who came to him for this purpose. But he hesitated about baptizing Jesus. He was not willing to do it. We read that—"John forbade him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*" Matt. iii: 14. It would seem from this as though John knew Jesus as soon as he saw him. And yet he says himself, speaking of Christ before his baptism:—"*I knew him not:* but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John i: 33. There seems to be a contradiction here. In the verse above, quoted

from St. Matthew, John appears to recognize Jesus as soon as he saw him; while in the other verse, he says expressly—"*I knew him not.*" But, when he used these words, I suppose he did not mean to say that he had no knowledge of Jesus at all. John and Jesus were cousins. And, though they lived in different and widely distant parts of the country, yet they would be most likely to meet, from time to time, when they went up with their parents to the great festivals of Jerusalem. And we can understand how John might have known Jesus as his cousin; might have known him as the Son of Mary; as one who was remarkably pure, and holy, and free from sin, so that he could speak of him as "coming after him, yet preferred before him; the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose;" and yet, at the same time, he might not have known positively that he was the Messiah. God told him that he should know this with entire certainty when he saw the Holy Spirit descending on him, like a dove, and abiding on him. John did see this at the baptism of Jesus.

After this had taken place, he said,—"I saw, and bare record that *this is the Son of God.*" John i: 34.

When John hesitated about this baptism, Jesus told him it was a right and proper thing for him to do. This was what he meant when he said, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. iii: 15. And then John baptized him.

This baptism took place in the river Jordan; but we do not know the exact spot where Jesus was baptized. There were several places on the river which were convenient for this purpose, because the banks were low and shelving. Which of these it was, at which the baptism of Jesus took place, we are not told. But it is not a matter of much importance. We know that Jesus *was* baptized, and that the baptism took place in the river Jordan.

And so we come now to speak of "The Baptism of Christ."

If you ever make a visit to that wonderful work of God—the Falls of Niagara—you will not be satisfied with just looking at it from one point of view, and then going away. Instead of this, you will spend a good deal of time in walking about, and looking at this great work from different points of view. It is necessary to do this if you wish to get a clear idea of Niagara, and to understand how beautiful, how grand,

how glorious it is. And it is exactly so when we come to study any important subject, like the baptism of Christ, that is now before us. And, there are three points of views from which we may look at this subject; and three lessons we may learn from it. You may easily remember these points if we put them in this way; *three looks* at the baptism of Christ; and *three lessons* from it.

We come now to take our FIRST *look at the baptism of Christ, and we see it to be*—VERY STRANGE.

We are not surprised to find that John felt unwilling to baptize Jesus when he first came to him. John knew very well that baptism was intended for the use of sinful men. It was the expression of a desire to have their sins washed away. He knew that when persons came to be baptized, with the right kind of feelings, that is, when they were truly sorry for their sins, those sins would be washed away. And then the water of baptism was a sign, or pledge, of the pardon of their sins. This was what Ananias meant, when he said to Saul, of Tarsus, after he had seen that wonderful vision,—"Arise and be baptized, and *wash away* thy sins." Acts xxii: 16. Saul's sins were really pardoned as soon as he repented, and had faith in Jesus as his Saviour.

But when he was baptized, the water of baptism was the sign, or seal, given to assure him that God had put away his sins.

And John knew very well, that though he himself was a sinner, yet Jesus was pure and holy. He had no sin of his own to be washed away. And this was what John meant when he he said,—"*I* have need to be baptized of *thee*." He could not understand why he, who was, as the apostle Paul says,—"Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," (Heb. vii: 26), should want to be baptized. The thought of trying to make *him* better, must have seemed to John like trying to bleach the snow, or polish the sunbeams.

Jesus did not stop to argue with John, and explain to him why it was that he desired to be baptized. He said to him,—"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. iii: 15.

I suppose that when Jesus used these words, he meant to tell John that he wished to be baptized, because it was the will of God, his Father in heaven, that he should be baptized. He called it,—"Fulfilling all righteousness." Doing the will of God is the best kind of righteousness. And we never can have a better

reason for doing anything than to know that God wishes us to do it. Jesus knew that it was the will of God that he should be baptized; and this was enough for him. But even when we know this, we cannot help being surprised at it. When we think of the pure and holy Jesus being baptized, as the poor sinners were whom he came to save, we cannot help feeling that the baptism of Jesus was *very strange.* This is what we see in our first look at it.

We take our second look at the baptism of Jesus, and we see that it was—VERY WONDERFUL.

And the wonderful thing about it was, not so much the baptism itself, as what followed it. The mere fact that Jesus went into the water of the river Jordan, though it might be called strange, could yet hardly be called wonderful. But look for a moment and see what took place there, just after the baptism was over. There we see Jesus walking along the banks of the river; and he is praying as he walks. No doubt, he is asking his Father in heaven to help him, and fit him for the great work he has to do. And see, as he is thus walking and praying, the heavens open directly above him. A glorious light shines down upon him, "above the brightness of the sun." And that bright

light is not the only thing we now see; but look at that beautiful snow-white dove coming down with the light! How gently it descends! How graceful its motions are! Nearer and nearer it comes to the blessed, baptized Saviour; and now, at last, it rests upon him. This is no common bird. It comes directly down from heaven. It is the Spirit of God—the Holy Ghost—the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity. In heaven he has no bodily form; but, on this occasion, he chose to make himself visible in the form of a dove. In this form he came down to anoint Jesus for his work, to remain with him and help him do that work. How wonderful this was! Nothing like it was ever seen in our world before. But this was not all the wonder.

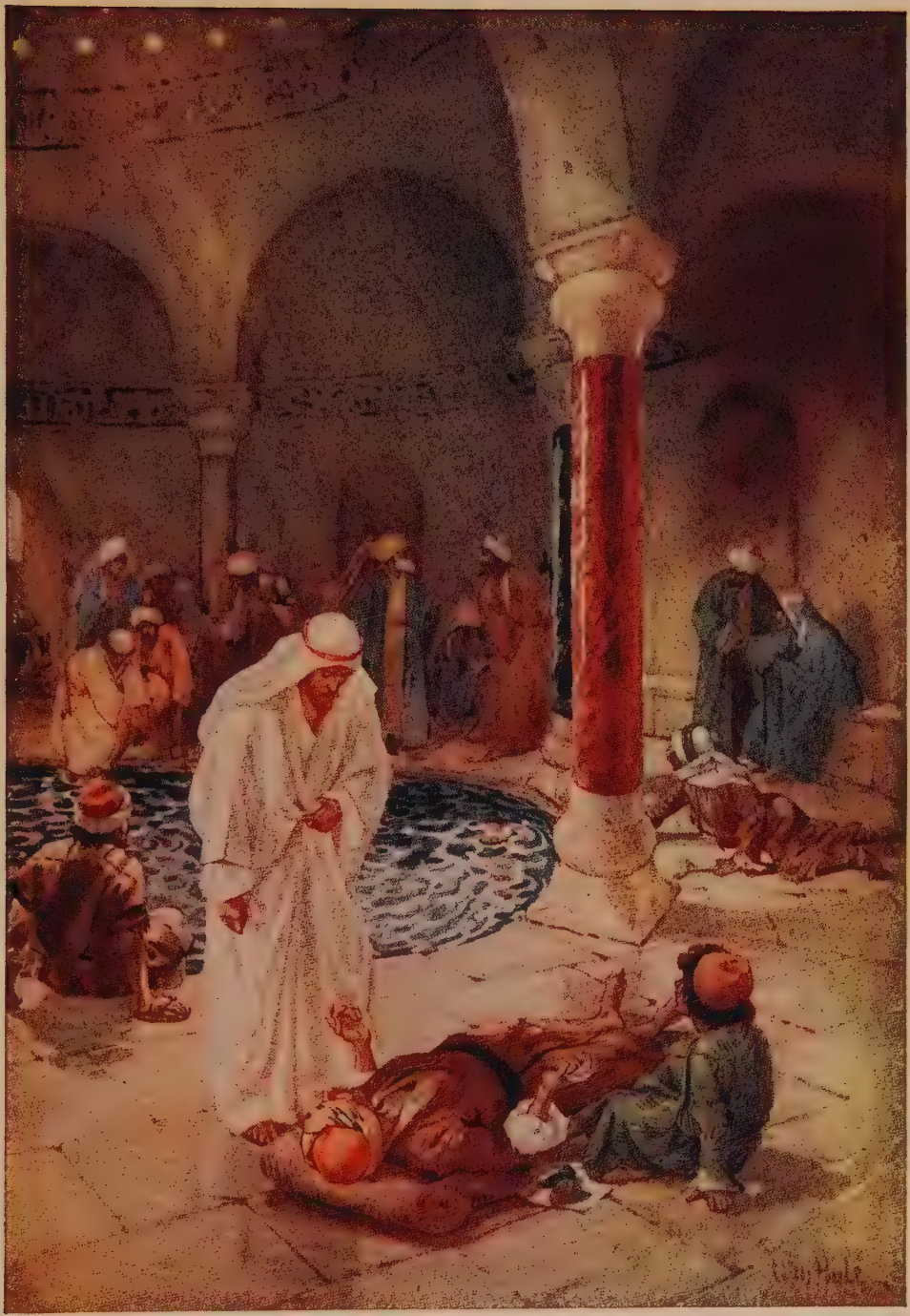
Not only what was *seen* at the baptism of Jesus was wonderful; but what was *heard* then, was not less wonderful. For now, let us look again at that opening in the heavens, and as we look, let us listen. A voice is heard coming out from the midst of that glorious light. It is the voice of God the Father. It comes down along that path of light from his glorious throne in heaven. That is the brightest and the holiest place in the universe. And these are the words which that voice speaks—"*This is my beloved*

Jesus Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.—*St. John v: 1–9.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

A visit to the medicinal hot baths of Tiberius suggested to me the use of similar architectural construction in endeavoring to realize the five-porched Pool of Bethesda. The "troubling" of the water, which gave rise to the tradition of angelic visitation, was probably due to the intermittent nature of the spring; thus resembling the periodic ebb and flow of that known as "St. Mary's Well" in the valley of the Kidron; if, indeed, the latter may not have been the fountain head of the Pool of Bethesda.



Son in whom I am well pleased." How wonderful this was! Everything about this event was wonderful. That opening in the heavens was wonderful. The glorious light shining down through that opening was wonderful. The Holy Spirit, coming down in the form of that heavenly dove, was wonderful. But, most wonderful of all was that voice of the Everlasting Father, sounding forth amidst the glory which was shining there. We have an illustration here of the truth of one of the most important doctrines of the Bible.

You know that we speak of the God whom we worship as—*The Trinity*. This means the three in one. God is a wonderful Being, in whom there are three persons, and yet only one God. The Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God. We cannot explain this, because we cannot understand it; but we believe it, because the Bible teaches it. But we need not wonder that we cannot understand all about God, because we cannot understand all about ourselves. You know, for example, that we each have a body, which can be seen and felt; and in these heads we each have a mind that thinks; and in these beating hearts we each

have a soul that loves, and hates, and fears. There are these three parts in me; yet I am not three men, but one man. And so it is with all of us. I do not mean to say this explains the doctrine of the Trinity, for it does not. I only use it as an illustration to show us that as we cannot understand ourselves, we must not be surprised if we find that we cannot understand God.

This wonderful thing that took place in connection with the baptism of Jesus both illustrates and proves the doctrine of the Trinity. For here we see the three great Persons of the Blessed Trinity taking part in what took place directly after this baptism. Jesus, the Son of God, is seen standing on the banks of the Jordan. God the Father is heard speaking to his Son Jesus, and saying how well pleased he is with him. And then God the Spirit is seen coming down in the shape of a dove, and resting on Jesus.

And this teaches us that the work of saving souls from death, on which Jesus was now entering, was a work *so great*, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity—could all unite in it. And when we think of all these things; of the

opening heavens; and the shining light; and the descending dove; and of the voice of the Father speaking to his Son, and declaring how well pleased he was with him; and when we remember, that all this was done to honor Jesus, and to show us how much he is esteemed in heaven; then, we must admit that this scene which occurred in connection with our Saviour's baptism, was one of the most wonderful events that ever took place since the world was made.

And now we take our third look at the scene of the baptism of Jesus, and we see that it was—VERY INSTRUCTIVE.

The instruction here all has reference to Christ. And *this* is the best of all instruction. All knowledge is valuable, but knowledge that relates to Jesus is more valuable than any other. The apostle Paul understood this very well when he said he was willing to endure the loss of all things "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Phil. iii: 8. And this third look at the baptism of Jesus may well be called an instructive look, for it branches out into the three lessons that are taught us by this event.

The first of these three lessons teaches us to think of Jesus as THE PLEASING SON.

This was the view of his character to which God the Father called attention when his voice was heard from that opening in the heavens, saying—"This is my beloved son *in whom I am* WELL PLEASED."

No doubt there were many things in Jesus which were pleasing to his heavenly Father. But that which was the most pleasing of all, was the cheerful readiness he showed in doing his Father's will. He said, on one occasion,—"I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" John vi: 36. On another occasion, he said,—"My *meat* is, to do the will of him that sent me." John iv: 34. And long before his entrance into our world, he had said,—"I *delight* to do thy will, O my God." Ps. xl: 8. From these three passages we learn that it was the *mission*, the *meat*, and the *delight* of our blessed Saviour to do the will of his Father. No wonder then he was so anxious to be baptized, when he knew that *this* was his Father's will. And Jesus came to be our example of the way in which we are to serve God. And there is nothing in which we need his example more than in learning to do the will of God. *This* was what made his Father so "well pleased" with him. And if we

wish to please God, as Jesus did, we must do it in the same way.

The will of God for us is that we should obey our parents, and mind the rules appointed for us, in our homes, in our schools, in our places of business, or wherever we may be. We must learn this lesson if we desire to please God. It is impossible to do this in any other way. There must be the same mind in us in this respect that was also in Christ Jesus. We must "tread in the blessed steps of his most holy life," in this matter of doing the will of God.

And now, let us take an illustration or two to show us what sort of boys and girls we shall be, if we learn to be like Jesus, as the pleasing son.

"General Havelock and his Boy." This brave soldier was both a great commander and a good man. He had a son whose name was Henry. One evening a gentleman was at the General's house. As they were talking together, Mrs. Havelock turned to her husband, and said,— "My dear, where is Henry? I have not seen him all the afternoon." The General started to his feet, quite excited, and said,—"Why, poor fellow! he's standing on London bridge, and in this cold wind, too! I left him there at twelve

o'clock to-day, and told him to wait there for me, and there he is still, I'm sure. In the pressure of business I quite forgot my appointment with him."

It was now seven o'clock in the evening—seven long hours that faithful, obedient boy had been waiting for his father! The General excused himself to his friend, called for a cab, and drove rapidly to the bridge; and sure enough, there was Henry, shivering in the cold, indeed, but patiently doing what his father had had told him to do. In the course of an hour they were back at the house, and as they came in, the General said to his friend, "You see, sir, the discipline of a soldier's family."

How well that dear boy had learned the lesson of submission to his Father's will, which made him the pleasing son!

"Wanted—A Boy!" A tradesman once advertised in the morning papers for a boy to work in his store—run errands and make himself generally useful.

The next morning the store was thronged with boys, of all ages and sizes, trying to get the place. The storekeeper only wanted *one* boy, and as he was at a loss to know how to get the right one out of so large a crowd, he

thought he must find out some plan to lessen the number of boys and to be sure of getting a good one. So he sent them all away till he could think over the matter a little. The next day the papers contained this advertisement:

"WANTED—A BOY WHO OBEYS HIS MOTHER."

And out of the crowd who were there the day before, how many do you suppose came to get that place? *Only two.* Whichever of these two the storekeeper chose we may be very certain would prove a good boy. Jesus was pleasing his Father in heaven all the time that he was obeying his Mother on earth. And so it is always. The boys who learn to obey at home are the boys who will be most wanted for places in business, and who will be most useful and successful in them.

And Jesus not only obeyed his Father in heaven and did his will, but he did it cheerfully and pleasantly. As we saw in the verse already quoted from the Psalms, he "*delighted* to do his will."

Let us take one illustration of the way in which a son or daughter may do this:

"Obeying his Mother Pleasantly." Harry had seen some boys flying their kites from the tops

of the houses, and he thought it would be nice fun to do so. So he came into the house, when his mother was away, and said, "Aunt Mary, may I go up to the top of the house and fly my kite?" His aunt wished to do everything she could to please him; but she thought this was a dangerous thing to do; so she said, "No, Harry, my boy; I think that's not safe. I'd rather you wouldn't go."

"All right," said Harry, "then I'll go out on the bridge and fly my kite."

His aunt smiled, and said she hoped he would always be as obedient as that.

One day his mother said to him, "Harry, what are you doing?"

"Spinning my top, mother."

"Can't you take the baby out to ride? Get out the carriage and I'll bring him down."

"All right," shouted the boy as he put away his top in his pocket and hastened to obey his mother.

"Uncle Willie," said Harry, at breakfast one day, "may I go over to your shop this morning? I want to see those baskets again that I was looking at yesterday."

"Oh, yes, Harry," said his uncle; "I shall be very glad to have you come."

"But I can't spare you to-day, Harry," said his mother. "I want you to go out with me; you can go to the shop another day."

"All right," said Harry, and went cheerfully on with his breakfast.

No matter what Harry was asked to do, or what refusal he met with, when asking for anything, his constant reply was, "All right." He never stopped to worry or tease. He never asked, "Why can't I?" or "Why must'nt I?" Harry had learned not only to obey, but to obey cheerfully and pleasantly.

He was treading in the footsteps of Jesus when he acted as the pleasing son.

The second lesson from the baptism of Jesus, leads us to think of him as—THE GENTLE DOVE.

We have said before that the dove here spoken of means the Holy Spirit. This is true. We are accustomed to sing the hymn which begins, —"Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove," etc. But, as the chief thing that distinguishes the dove is its gentleness; and as this heavenly dove rested upon Jesus, showing us that the Holy Spirit "without measure," was to remain with him; then we may think of Jesus as having all that gentleness which the dove represented. And so, taking it in this sense, we may well

speak of Jesus as the gentle dove. When we see that dove descending and resting on him, it teaches us that he was to be very gentle. And we know that this was the case. His gentleness was one of the most striking things about him. He said himself to his disciples while on earth, —"Learn of me; for *I am meek and lowly of heart.*" Matt. xi: 29. This is the same as if he had said,—"Learn of me; for I am gentle." This is one of the first things we learn about our blessed Saviour, as we repeat the words of that sweet hymn, connected with our earliest recollections,—"*Gentle Jesus*, Meek and Mild," etc. When the apostle Paul was writing to the Corinthians, he says,—"I beseech you by the *gentleness* of Christ." II. Cor. x: 1.

We see the gentleness of Jesus all through the history of his life. Let us take a single illustration of it. One day, the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus, whom they accused of having committed a great sin. They said, that according to the law of Moses, this woman ought to be stoned. And they asked Jesus what he thought about the case. They did this not because they hated sin, and not because they cared so very much for the law of Moses, but simply because they wanted to find something

to say against Jesus. And they felt certain of doing this now. They thought they had laid a trap for him, in which he would be sure to be taken, whatever he might say. It seemed to them that Jesus would be obliged to say one of two things, viz.: either that the woman *ought* to be stoned, or that she ought *not*. If Jesus had said that the woman ought to be stoned, they would have accused him of being hard-hearted and cruel. If he had said she ought not to be stoned, they would have accused him of teaching contrary to the law of Moses. But, instead of saying either of these things, Jesus looked those wicked Jews in the face, and said,—"*He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her.*" In this way they set their own consciences to work against them. They felt that they were quite as great sinners before God as this wretched woman was. Ashamed of themselves, they quietly crept out, one by one. "And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, 'Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?' She said, 'No man, Lord.' And Jesus said unto her,

'*Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.*'" John viii: 3-11.

Here we see beautifully illustrated the wonderful gentleness of Jesus. And we must learn to imitate him in the gentleness of his spirit if we wish to be his disciples. There is marvellous power in gentle words and actions, to help us in trying to do good to men. Let us take an example or two of the power of gentleness.

"The Gospel in a Kiss." A Christian lady went to a city missionary, and said she wished to make herself useful among the poor. "I am willing to do anything in my power," she said, "but I can't talk to people."

The missionary said she might do some good by kind actions, even if she could not speak kind words. Praying to God to help her, and taking some little books and tracts, she went out, in a gentle loving spirit, to try what she could do.

One of the first cases she met with was a woman who had been in prison for drunkenness, and other sins, still worse than that. She was well known for the violence of her temper, and for her abusive language. This poor woman's case seemed so desperate that the missionary had never even thought of trying to do her

any good. He had warned this Christian lady against going to visit her, as he thought it hardly safe. But she went. She sought this poor creature out in her miserable room. She spoke some kind words to her, and bending over her in pity, she kissed her. The woman looked up with astonishment, and said:

"You wouldn't do that if you knew who I was."

"Yes, but I do know."

"Then why did you do it?"

The loving, gentle answer was:—"Because I love Jesus Christ, and that makes me love every one that needs him." Then she took this poor outcast to her own home, and clothed her. When Sunday came she was at church. Before long she became a changed woman—a new creature in Christ Jesus. Afterwards when someone said to her,—"Mrs. W. how did the gospel first come to you?" Her answer was, —"*It came in a kiss.*"

"The Power of a Kind Word." Two young girls, Rosa and Mary, were going along the street. "Rosa," said Mary, "look at that horrid, drunken man sitting on the curbstone; do come across the street, for I wouldn't pass near him for anything!" So Mary ran away. Rosa felt

afraid, too, but she had just been repeating the words of a little song she had learned to sing, which said,—"Speak a kind word whenever you can." Then she went up to the wretched-looking man, and said timidly, "Poor man, I'm sorry for you! can I do anything to help you?"

He raised his head, looked at her in surprise, and his sad face almost made Rosa cry for pity.

"Little girl, your kind words have helped me already, I never expected to hear any such words again, for I have no friend on earth."

"But, God will be your friend, if you ask him," said Rosa, as she went nearer to him still. "Did you ever ask him?"

"No; I've been sinning against him all my life," groaned the man.

"Poor man! Let God be your friend. He can do everything for you. I am your friend, but I can't do anything more than speak a kind word."

"Darling child, that kind word has saved me. Good-bye."

He held out his trembling hand. Rosa was not afraid now. She placed her plump hand in his, and as he bent down to kiss it, two big tears fell upon it. Then he went away, and Rosa rejoined her companion.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.—*St. Mark vi: 35–44.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Six miles across the lake from Capernaum is the little plain of Batiha, bordered to the north by the marshes through which Jordan enters the sea, and backed by hills, the lower slopes of which, in the month Nisan, are clothed with refreshing verdure and wild flowers. Here was wrought the mighty miracle by which Jesus satisfied the hunger of a vast multitude; and here, as elsewhere, were doubtless to be found some who were stirred less by thankfulness for benefits received, than by envy at the supposed better fortune of their neighbors.

Years after this Rosa was present in Sunday-school. A noble-looking, silver-haired old gentleman was addressing the scholars. He told them always to be kind and gentle to the friendless and distressed, and especially the poor drunkard; "for when I was friendless, and wretched, and forsaken," said he, "God sent a dear child to speak a kind word, and that word saved me."

When the school closed, a young girl came up to the aged speaker, held out her hand, and with tears in her eyes, said, "Sir, do you remember me?" He looked at her long and earnestly, and then, clasping her outstretched hand, said slowly and solemnly, "Yes, yes, dear child, it was the loving, gentle word you spoke that saved me."

Let us think of Jesus as the gentle dove, and try to learn this lesson from him.

The third lesson from the baptism of Jesus leads us to think of him as—THE ATONING LAMB.

It was after Jesus had been baptized, that John the Baptist pointed him out to his disciples, and said,—"*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" John i: 29.

This is the most valuable and important lesson about the character and work of Jesus

that we can ever learn. We may be thankful to have this lesson brought out so clearly, at the very beginning of his ministry. The apostle Paul teaches us the same great truth about Jesus, and shows us *how* he was to do this work, when he tells us that Jesus "appeared, to put away sin, *by the sacrifice of himself.*" Heb. ix: 29. And in another place he says more plainly still, that "*Christ died for our sins.*" I. Cor. xv: 3. This is what is meant when we speak of Jesus as the Atoning Lamb. We all deserved to die on account of our sins. But Jesus came into the world to die in our place.

There is an interesting story in Roman history which illustrates very beautifully this part of our subject. We are told that, about four hundred years before Christ, there was a great earthquake in the city of Rome. This earthquake caused a large portion of the open space, called the forum, in front of the Capitol, to sink into the earth. Thus, a great gulf, or chasm, was left in the midst of the most public part of the city. The people tried to fill it up; but in vain. All that they threw in disappeared, and left the awful chasm as deep and as wide as before.

The citizens of Rome were in great distress about it. They came to their priests and

inquired what was to be done. The priests consulted their gods. The answer given was that the chasm could only be filled by throwing into it the most precious thing in Rome,—that on which the greatness of Rome depended. While they were wondering what this could mean, a brave soldier, whose name was Marcus Curtius, presented himself before them. He said there was nothing more precious in Rome —nothing on which its greatness depended more—than a valiant soldier, armed as for battle. He offered *himself* to die for the people. And then, arraying himself in complete armor, and mounting his war-horse, he galloped to the edge of the precipice, and sprang into the abyss. Immediately after this, the story says, the earth closed; the chasm disappeared, and the forum resumed the appearance it had always borne before. This is the story, and whether it be true or not, it affords a good illustration of the way in which Jesus, "the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world." And now the precious truth which the gospel teaches, is that, "*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*"

"The Wet Sand." A woman came to a minister one day, bringing with her a bundle of

wet sand. She laid it down before him, and said, "Do you see this, sir?"

"Yes," he said, "it is wet sand."

"But do you know what it means?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean by it. What is it?"

"Ah! sir," she said, "that's me. My sins are like these grains of sand. They can't be numbered. O, wretched creature that I am! How can I get rid of these sins?"

"Where did you get this sand from?" asked the minister.

"I got it from the seashore, sir."

"Well, go back to the seashore. Take a spade with you. When you get there, dig, dig, dig; raise a great heap of sand; shovel it up as high as you can, then leave it there; take your stand on the seashore; wait till the tide comes up, and see what effect the water of the sea will have upon your heap of sand."

"Oh! I see," she said, "I see what you mean. The water will take the sand all away. And so the blood of Christ will take away my sins." That woman was learning the lesson of the Atoning Lamb.

"Sins Blotted Out." A little boy was once much puzzled about his sins being blotted out.

He came to his mother, and said, "I can't think what becomes of all the sins that God forgives, mother."

"Why, Charlie, can you tell where all the figures are that you wrote on your slate yesterday?"

"I washed them all out, mother. Why, they are *nowhere* now; they are gone," said Charlie.

"And just so it is with our sins when we believe in Jesus," said his mother. "They are nowhere; they are gone. The Lamb of God hath taken them away." They are "remembered no more." Jer. xxxi: 34. God "casts them behind his back." Jer. xxxviii: 17.

Here is another illustration of this same great truth, in a different form. We may call it:

"The Debt Paid." That great Statesman, Henry Clay, was once greatly troubled by a debt of ten thousand dollars, which he owed to the Northern Bank of Kentucky in Lexington. Some of his friends, in different parts of the country, heard of his trouble. In a quiet way, they raised the money, and paid off the debt, without letting Mr. Clay know of it. In ignorance of what had been done, he went to the bank one day, and addressing Mr. Scott, the cashier, he said:

"I have called to see you, Mr. Scott, about that debt of mine to the bank."

"You don't owe us anything," replied Mr. Scott.

Mr. Clay looked at him inquiringly, and said, "You don't understand me, Mr. Scott. I've come to talk about that debt of ten thousand dollars that I owe your bank."

"You don't owe us a dollar, Mr. Clay."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Mr. Clay, in utter amazement.

"I mean, sir, that a number of your friends have united together and paid off your debt. There's nothing on our books against you."

Mr. Clay could not speak a word. Tears filled his eyes as he turned and walked quietly out of the bank.

And this is what Jesus has done for us, in the language of the hymn:

"Jesus paid it all,
All the debt we owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

"Instead of Me." A little girl, in her prayer was heard to use these words:—"I thank thee, O, blessed Saviour, that thou wast punished—*instead of me.*"

And on hearing of this, some one wrote these simple lines:

"How sweet is the gospel! it comes from above,
To speak of the wonders of heavenly love;
Deserving of wrath, here mercy I see,
For Jesus was punished—*instead of me.*

"He saw my distress, and my soul to win,
He said he would take on himself my sin;
And he stepped from his glory that he might be
Accused and punished—*instead of me.*

"O Saviour! all words are too weak to show
How much to thy marvellous love I owe;
But my full heart sends up its thanks to thee,
Because thou wast punished—*instead of me.*

"And to thee I would yield a life of praise,
Speak good of thy name, and walk in thy ways;
Whilst I wait with desire thy face to see,
Who once was punished—*instead of me.*"

And whenever we hear or read of the baptism of Christ, let us think of the three looks we have here taken at it, and the three lessons we have learned from it. The three looks are—very *strange*—very *wonderful*—very *instructive.* The three lessons are about—*the Pleasing Son—the Gentle Dove—the Atoning Lamb.*

I do not know that we could close this subject better than by using here, with a very

slight alteration, the words of the Collect in the prayer book, which we use after persons have been baptized:

"We yield thee humble thanks, O heavenly Father, that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee; increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy Holy Spirit to *all baptized* persons; that being now born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, they may continue thy servants, and attain thy promises; through the same Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, everlastingly. Amen."

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

FOREMOST among the many wonderful things connected with the history of our blessed Saviour while on earth were the days of temptation which he spent in the wilderness. What a striking contrast there is between the event we were considering last and that we are to consider now,—between the baptism and the temptation! There, the heavens were opened above him, and the light which streamed down through that opening, must have covered all around with glory, and have made everything look bright and beautiful. Here, there is only the ordinary sunlight, and it shines on him in the wilderness, where all around is wild, and desolate, and gloomy. There, he was in the company of his cousin, John the Baptist, and of numbers of the people who had come, like himself, to be baptized; here, he is separated from human society, and the wild beasts of the

desert are his only companions. There, he heard the voice of his loving Father, speaking words of comfort and encouragement to him; while here, the only voice he hears is that of Satan—the tempter, the enemy of himself and those he came to save. That voice speaks horrible things to him, things that were intended to spoil the great work he had come down from heaven to do. In the baptism of Jesus we see everything that was pleasant and comforting to him; but in the temptation of Jesus we see nothing but what must have been in the highest degree painful and trying to him.

And this is what we have now to consider—The Temptation of Christ.

And in studying this part of our Saviour's life there are two points of view from which we may look at it; one of these is what we are *told* about his temptation, and the other is what we are *taught* by it.

And so we may wrap up in three words, each beginning with the letter t, all we have to say on this subject. These are—*temptation—told—taught.*

We begin then by noticing what we are told about the temptation of Christ in the New Testament.

Well then, we are told that he was—TEMPTED. The word tempt is sometimes used in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad sense. When used in a good sense, it simply means to *try* a person, or thing. For instance, suppose a man makes a rope. He wishes to know how strong it is. He fastens one end of it to a high beam and hangs heavy weights on the other end. He does this in order to find out how much his rope will bear. In other words, he is *trying* it.

And this is one of the meanings of the word tempt. We find the word used in this sense, in Gen. xxii: 1, where it says that—"God did *tempt* Abraham." This does not mean, of course, that God tried to persuade Abraham to do something wrong. God never tempts or tries people in *that* way. It only means that he tried him, as the man would try his rope, to see how much it would bear. This is the good sense of the word tempt.

But, there is another, and a bad sense, of this word tempt. We see this when it is used to mean—enticing, or persuading to do wrong. Suppose a hungry boy is standing in front of a baker's shop-window. He sees a lot of nice, hot rolls in the window. If the hunger that he feels, entices him to take one of them, then the

boy is tempted, in a bad sense. He is enticed to do wrong. And this is the sense in which this word is used in reference to our Saviour. When it is said he was *tempted*, the meaning is that the trial was made upon him to see if he could be induced or persuaded to think, or feel, or say, or do something that was wrong.

Then we are told that this temptation took place —IN THE WILDERNESS. This means "the wilderness of Judea." It lies between Jerusalem and Jericho. It is one of the most lonely, dreary, desolate regions to be found in the world. We know not which part of this wilderness it was where the temptation took place, but it was somewhere in that gloomy region.

We are told that Jesus was—"LED"—*into this temptation.* The Spirit of God led him into the wilderness for this purpose. Matt. iv: 1. And it makes all the difference in the world whether we are "led" into temptation, or whether we rush into it ourselves, without being led. Shadrack, Mesech, and Abednego were led into the temptation which required them either to bow down to the golden image, or to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. And when they came to be thrown into the furnace, they asked God to take care of them, and he did. But,

suppose they had leaped into the furnace of their own accord, do you suppose God would have kept them from being burnt? Of course not. When God leads us into temptation, he will always help us, if we ask him to do so.

We are told that the—DEVIL—*was the tempter* in this case. This has been his business since the world began. This was the business he was engaged in when we first find him mentioned in the Bible. When Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden of Eden, he was there to do it. And this is what he has been doing ever since. And he gets one of his many names from tempting men. He is called "the tempter." We read in St. Matt. iv: 3,—"And when *the tempter* came to him."

And here the question meets us—*How did Satan come to Jesus?* A great deal has been written on this subject. Some people think that Satan did not appear in any visible, personal form to our Saviour, but that he came unseen, and whispered, or suggested his temptation to him, as he does to us. Nothing can be proved on this point, because nothing has been said on it.

My own opinion is that Satan came to Jesus in his own personal form, as a fallen angel. I

think so for two reasons. One reason for this is, that *it agrees better with the scripture account of it.* In this account we read of Satan, the tempter, coming to Jesus and having a conversation with him. Now, if we should read of any two persons meeting, and having a talk together, the most natural way of thinking of it, would be to suppose that they really met, face to face, and spoke to one another, just as you and I might do on meeting. This is what the scriptures tell us of Jesus and the tempter, and I see no reason why we should not take the account of the temptation exactly as it is given.

My other reason for thinking that Satan appeared to Jesus in his own person is *that he could not hide himself from him*, however much he might have wished to do it. When he comes to tempt us, we cannot see him, because we cannot see spirits. *But Jesus could.* We find it written, (John ii: 25), that Jesus—"needed not that any should testify of man; for *he knew what was in man.*" He could read the thoughts and hearts of men. Matt. ix: 4. And if this were so, then he could see spirits. And so it is clear that Satan could not hide himself from him. Whatever form he might have chosen to appear in, or if he came as a spirit without any

Jesus Walking Upon the Sea

And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. —*St. Mark vi: 45–52.*

NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Urgently as his human nature needed rest and refreshment, Jesus worked no miracle to secure it; nor did he even take advantage of the solitude obtained after sending the multitude away to their homes, and his disciples to Bethsaida. After a few hours spent not in sleep but in prayer, once more his miraculous power was exerted in love and mercy. He walked upon the sea, overtaking his disciples, so that no time should be lost in hastening to the relief of the wretched and distressed, who eagerly awaited his return to the western shore.

bodily form, Jesus would have known him in a moment. Doubtless, Satan knew this, and so I think he would not be guilty of the folly of trying to hide himself from him—"to whom all hearts are open; all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." And for these reasons, I believe, that when Satan came to tempt Jesus, he did it by appearing to him in his own proper person.

We are told again that Jesus was in the wilderness FORTY DAYS; *and that he* FASTED all this time. This does not mean, that he merely changed his articles of food and ate less than usual, as we do when we fast; for St. Luke iv: 2, tells us expressly that,—"in those days he did *eat nothing.*" But to go forty days without eating at all, and yet remain alive, could only be done by miracle. And, from what we read in Matt. iv: 2, it appears that he not only ate nothing during all those days, but that he never felt hungry, till they were over. We keep the solemn season of Lent every year, in memory of these days of temptation that Jesus spent in the wilderness. And though we cannot fast as he did, and are not required to do so, yet we may, as the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent says—ask God to give us grace—"to use such

abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may ever obey his godly motions."

We are told that at the close of these forty days Jesus felt HUNGRY, and then Satan came to him to take advantage of this feeling, and press him with some new temptations. We are not to suppose that the tempter did not come to Jesus till after the forty days were ended. St. Mark says—(chapter i: 13),—"He was there, in the wilderness, *forty days tempted of Satan.*" It is evident from this, that Satan was tempting him, more or less, all through those forty days. He would probably tempt him in one way, then leave him for awhile, and come back, by and by, and tempt him in another way. The three temptations mentioned are not all that Jesus passed through, but only specimens of the different ways in which he was tempted.

When he felt hungry, we are told that Satan came, and wanted him to turn some of the stones of the wilderness into bread, that he might eat, and satisfy his hunger. This was a temptation to distrust his Father's care for him. If he had done this, it would have been a dishonor to his Father in heaven. Jesus met this temptation by quoting a passage of scripture. He said,—"It is written man shall not live by

bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Deut. viii: 3.

Then we are told how Satan took Jesus to the holy city—*i. e.*—to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and asked him to throw himself down in the presence of the people. In the last temptation Satan tried to get Jesus to trust his Father too little; now he tries to get him to trust his Father too much. We know not exactly what the pinnacle of the temple was. But it must have been one of the highest parts of the temple. From that to the bottom of the valley, at the foot of the hill on which the temple stood, was a depth that would make one dizzy to look at it.

Some people think that Satan only took Jesus to this pinnacle of the temple in a vision, or in thought. But this is not what the Bible tells us. It says,—"*Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.*" Matt. iv: 5. And when it says this, I believe it means just what it says. If it do not mean what it says here, how can we be sure that it means what it says in other places? While they are on this pinnacle of the temple, Satan tempts Jesus to cast himself down. And he pretends to be very pious all at once, and

quotes scripture to induce Jesus to yield to his temptation. The passage that he quotes is in Psalm xci: eleventh and twelfth verses. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Satan does not quote the passage as it is found in the Psalms. He leaves out one very important part of the eleventh verse,—"*To keep thee in all thy ways.*" This clause shows us that God only promises to take care of us when we are doing our duty, and are in the way in which he has led us. If we go out of the way of duty, we cannot expect that God will take care of us.

For example, when Daniel was cast into the lion's den, he was doing his duty. He was in the way that God had appointed him to walk in. And so, when he prayed to God, he sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths that they might not hurt him. But, suppose that Daniel had gone of his own accord, and jumped into the lions' den; would he have had any right to expect that God would protect him? None, whatever. There would have been no angel there to shut the lions' mouths; and they would soon have made an end of Daniel.

And so it was with Jesus, on the pinnacle of the temple. If he had cast himself down, as the tempter asked him to do, he would not have been in the path of duty. *That* was not one of the ways that his Father in heaven wished him to go in. And so, he answered this temptation as he had answered the previous one, by a text of scripture. He said,—"It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Deut. vi: 16.

After this, we are told of the last temptation to which Jesus was exposed on this occasion. We read,—"Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." Matt. iv: 8. There is a high mountain in the wilderness of Judea, to the west of Jericho that answers the description here given, and that is generally supposed to be the mountain here referred to. But there is no mountain in the world from which "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" could be seen at once, without some miraculous help. And there must have been such help in this case. From the top of the mountain referred to, a large part of the mountains, and valleys, and plains, and cities of Palestine could be seen.

And then, in connection with these, Satan must have woven into a sort of vision a pictorial view of "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." St. Luke tells us that this was done—"*in a moment of time.*" Chap. iv: 5. This proves that it must have been done in some miraculous way.

And when Satan had spread out before the eye of Jesus this vision of worldly glory, he said to him,—"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me!" How could he look the pure and holy Jesus in the face and utter such blasphemous words! What a wonder the ground did not open beneath his feet and swallow him up! Satan was at his old work again of telling lies. The kingdoms of the world did not belong to him; he had no power to give them away. God the Father had given them to Jesus already; and they belonged of right to him. And so, by quoting scripture once more, Jesus resists this temptation, as he calmly says,—"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv: 10. Deut. vi: 13.

And so the forty days of our Saviour's temptation ended.

And then, the last thing we are told in connection with this temptation of Jesus is, that after it was all over, and Satan had left him,—"*Angels came and ministered unto him.*" Matt. vi: 11.

These are the things we are told about the temptation of Christ.

And now we come to speak of *the things we are*—TAUGHT—by this temptation. There are *four* lessons of which we wish to speak.

In the first place, the temptation of Christ shows us that—we must expect temptation.

If Jesus, who was so pure and holy, did not escape from being tempted while he was in this world, it is very certain that *we* cannot escape. We must be tempted. You know that we go to school to learn. But this world is the school in which God puts us. And some of the most important lessons we have to learn in this school can only be learned by our being tried or tempted. Wherever we are, and whatever we are doing—at home, at school, at work, or at play, we shall find ourselves tempted, as we say in the general confession, to do—"those things that we ought not to do, and to leave undone the things that we ought to do." Here is a story about a grasshopper, which illustrates this

part of our subject. It is a true story, only it is put in the form of a fable, so that we can allow the grasshopper to speak:

A Sunday-school boy was studying his geography lesson under a shady tree one summer's day. A grasshopper was jumping about near him, and in danger of getting caught in a spider's web close by. "Take care, Mr. Grasshopper," said the boy. "There's a spider's web. If you don't look out, you'll be caught in it."

"You mind your book," said the grasshopper. "I know what I'm about. Do you think I'm such a fool as to jump into that web?"

These words were hardly out of his mouth, before, as he took another leap, he was caught by one of his hind legs in the spider's web. With an awkward turn, he had come round to hang with his head downwards, and his body towards the web.

"There," said the boy, "didn't I tell you?"

"Pooh! that's nothing," said the grasshopper. "There's only one foot caught. I've got five free yet. I'll show you. Just look here." Then he gave a push with his other hind foot. But instead of loosing the first foot, the second was caught in the web, too.

"Aha," said the boy, "there you go."

"Wait a minute; I've four feet free yet," said the grasshopper, as he struggled with all his might. But, one after another, his feet were caught, till at last the whole six were entangled in the net. Then out rushed the spider, and fastened thread after thread around him till the poor grasshopper was bound as tight as a drum, and the spider made many a meal of him.

Now, Satan, like a great spider, is weaving his webs about us all the time. And, as Jesus said, we must—"Watch, and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things." Luke xxi: 36.

"The Old Man's Struggles." A good old Christian man was asked once if he had much trouble with his temptations, and this is what he said about it:

"Indeed, I have trouble enough with them. This is what I have to do every day:—I have two falcons to tame;—(a falcon is a bird of prey something like an eagle, but much smaller)—two hares to keep from running away; two hawks to manage; a serpent to confine; a lion to chain, and a sick man to tend and wait upon."

"Why that can't be," said his friend; "no one could attend to all these things at once."

"Yes, indeed," said the old man, "it is just as I have said. The two falcons are my two eyes, which I must diligently guard, lest they should look at something that may be dangerous to my soul; the two hares are my feet, which I must hold back, lest they should run into sinful ways; the two hawks are my two hands, which, as the catechism says, I must 'keep from picking and stealing, and learn to labor truly to get mine own living;' the serpent is my tongue, which I must 'keep from evil—speaking, lying, and slandering;' the lion is my heart, which I have to struggle with all the time, to keep from evil thoughts and feelings; and the sick man is my whole self, which always needs my watchfulness and care."

And if we have all these things to attend to, we must know a good deal about temptation.

Here is a story to show one of the ways in which temptation may come to us. We may call it:

"John and the Postage-stamp." John was a boy who "lived out." His mother lived on a small farm among the rocky hills of New England; and John wrote to her every week. One day he picked up an old envelope from the kitchen wood-box. On this envelope he saw a

postage-stamp, which had been used once, but had no mark on it, to show that it had been used. "The postmaster missed his aim, then," said John. "He left no mark on this stamp. It is as good as new. I can use it myself."

Then he moistened it by the steam from the spout of the tea-kettle, and carefully pulled the stamp off.

"Don't do it," said his conscience; "for that would be cheating. The stamp has been on one letter; it ought not to be used again."

"It can be used again, very well," said John, "for there's no mark on it. The post-office people won't know."

"But *you* know," said conscience, "and that is enough. It's not honest to use it the second time. It's but a little matter, to be sure; yet it's cheating."

"But, no one will know it," said John, faintly.

"No one!" cried conscience. "Yes, God will know it; and that is enough; and he, you know, desireth truth in *the inward parts.*" Ps. li: 6.

"Yes," cried all the better parts of John's character, "it would be cheating to use the postage-stamp the second time, *and I'll not do it.*"

Then he tore the stamp in two and threw it away. John gained a glorious victory that day.

If he had used that stamp he would have been like the foolish grasshopper when he got his first leg caught in the spider's web. When once caught in that web it is hard to get clear of it. Let us try to keep out of it.

We must expect temptation. This is the first lesson taught us by the temptation of Christ.

The second lesson taught us by this subject is, that—THERE IS NO SIN IN BEING TEMPTED.

I mean by this that there is no sin in it, *if we do not give way* to the temptation. They were dreadful sins that Satan tempted our blessed Saviour to commit during those forty days in the wilderness. It is awful to think what the result would have been if Jesus had given way to any of them! But never, for a moment, did he think of yielding to them. Bravely and grandly he resisted them all. And the consequence was that Jesus came out from that temptation as good, and as pure, and as holy, as he was before. And so it will be with us if we resist temptation. No matter how much we may be tempted, it will do us no harm, *if we do not yield to the temptation.* Your heart, or my heart, is like a fort, which belongs to Jesus. What he tells us to do, is to—"*Hold the Fort*" for him.

Satan may come and try to get possession of this fort. But he cannot take it by storm. He cannot force his way into it, because Jesus is stronger than he. And so he tempts us by threats, or by promises to open the gates of the fort and let him in. And in doing this he will tell all manner of falsehoods. This is very sinful; but then the sin is Satan's, and not ours. We have no share in the sin so long as we do not yield to Satan, and do what he wants us to do. God says to us,—"If sinners entice thee, *consent thou not.*" Prov. i: 10. To entice means to tempt, or persuade to do wrong. But this enticing is not our work. It is not what we do. It is done by some one outside of ourselves. We are not to blame for that. It is not our sin. The sin only begins with us *when we consent to the enticing*, or yield to the temptation. No matter how strong the enticement may be, nor how long the temptation may last, if we do not yield to it, it can do us no harm. There is no sin in being tempted.

One of the best illustrations of this part of our subject, is seen in the case of Job. We have an account of it in the first two chapters of this book.

Job was a great and rich man. His position was that of a wealthy and powerful Arab Sheik.

He was one of the best men in the world. Satan said that Job only served God because he had found that service profitable, or because God had made him rich and had done so much for him. Then he asked God to let him take away Job's property and see if, in *this way*, he could not destroy his faith and piety.

God gave Satan leave to do this. Immediately he undertook to tempt Job, and try if he could not make him give up his trust in God, and think, and feel, and speak wickedly about him.

He contrived to have Job's property all taken away from him very suddenly. The plan was so arranged that the reports of his losses should come in upon him, one after another, in rapid succession, like the waves of the sea, so that he might be overwhelmed by them.

One day a servant came running in to Job, all out of breath, to tell him that a band of robbers had stolen away all his five hundred yoke of oxen, and not one of them was left. While he was speaking, another servant came running in, to say that his seven thousand sheep had all been destroyed by lightning, and not one of them was left. While he was speaking, there came another to say that a band of robbers had seized his three thousand camels, had driven

them all away, and not one of them was left. And while he was speaking, another came to tell him that his ten children—his seven sons and three daughters were feasting in their elder brother's house, when there came a terrible whirlwind and blew down the house. His children were all killed! How dreadful this must have been! And how did Job act when this temptation, or trial came upon him? Did he get angry, and say that it was cruel in God to treat him so? No. But we read that,—"He rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down on the ground, and worshiped, and said, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Job i: 20-22.

Then Satan said that Job did not care much for anything so long as he only enjoyed good health; but that if God would allow some painful disease to come upon him, then he would lose his trust in God, and speak wickedly of him. And God allowed Satan to tempt him in this way. He smote poor Job with one of the most painful and loathsome diseases known. It came out in terrible boils all over his body, from the crown of his head to the soles of his

feet. The sight was so offensive that it was painful to look at him, or to come near him. His wife yielded to the tempter, and said to Job,—"Curse God, and die!" But poor, patient Job, as he lay among the ashes, meekly replied to her,—"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" "In all this, did not Job sin with his lips." Job ii: 10.

And so Job's case gives us a good illustration of the second lesson taught by our Saviour's temptation, viz.—that there is no sin in being tempted.

The third lesson taught us by this part of the life of Christ, is—HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION.

Jesus had power to have driven Satan away from him as soon as he appeared if he had chosen to do so. He might have said to him at the beginning of the temptation what he said to him at the close of it,—"Get thee hence, Satan;" and he would have been obliged to go. But that would not have helped us any. And one thing that Jesus had in view when he consented to be tempted, was to teach us this very lesson we are now considering. He wished to show us how we are to resist temptation when it meets us. You may notice how Jesus answered Satan from the scriptures every time

that he tempted him. "It is written"—"It is written," was what he had to say. The Bible is called—"the sword of the spirit." Eph. vi: 17. This sword is the weapon we must use in fighting Satan. And here Jesus shows us how to use it. He is the Captain of our salvation. We are his soldiers. In this temptation scene, Jesus does, as it were, step out before us, with this sword in his hand, to show us how to use it. Here we see him skilfully handling this sword. When Satan aims a blow at him, he wards it off with this sword of the spirit, saying,—"It is written"—"It is written." And this shows how important it is for us to be well acquainted with the scriptures. David was showing us the true use to make of the truth we are taught in God's blessed book when he said,—"Thy word *have I hid in mine heart*, that I might not sin against thee." Ps. cxix: 11. Now let us take an example or two of the good that will come to us from making a right use of the Bible.

"The Antidote." There is a tree found in the West Indies called the Manchineel. It is a good looking tree. The fruit that it bears looks like the golden pippin. It is beautiful to the eye, and has a fragrant smell; but, when eaten, it produces certain death. The juice of this

fruit is so deadly that the Indians dip their arrows in it for the purpose of poisoning their enemies when they wound them. It is remarkable that wherever this tree grows, there is always found, not far from it, a plant, the juice of which counteracts and cures the poison of the manchineel. How well this poison may represent the sad effect of sin! And then, in the effect produced by this healing plant, we see illustrated the influence exerted by God's blessed word on souls that are poisoned by sin. And this is what David meant, when he said, —"He sent *his word*, and *healed* them." Ps. cvii: 20.

"Thou, God, Seest Me." "I'll pay him back; see if I don't!" said Jim, picking himself up from the ice, and scowling at Ned, who had hit him as he skated by. Ned did not mean it; but it was a hard knock.

"Ah, Jim!" said good old farmer Hayes, "don't hit him here, wait till you find a safer place."

"What place?—where, where?" asked Jamie.

"*A place where God is not*," said the farmer.

Ah! if we should never tell a lie, or steal, or do anything wrong, till we find a place where God is not, how this would help us to resist temptation!

"The Bible-Lamp." Harry was sent on an errand one evening in the winter time. After giving him his message, his mother said,—"Be sure and take the lantern with you, Harry."

"What do I want with a lantern?" said Harry. "I know the way well enough." So he went without the lantern.

Very soon, in crossing the road, he stumbled into a hole, and wounded his leg, besides covering his clothes with mud. On his way back he forgot that the fence was broken near the edge of a ravine; and as he was groping his way along, he fell over the bank to the bottom of the ravine. He did not break his limbs, as he might have done; and succeeded in getting out, but he returned home covered with mud and bruises. *The lantern would have saved him from all this.*

And the Bible is just like such a lantern. "Thy word," says David, "*is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" Ps. cxix: 105. Let us take it with us wherever we go. It will keep us from falling into many a horrible pit, and from getting many a painful wound. The third lesson we are taught by the temptation of Christ, is—how to resist temptation.

The fourth lesson we learn from the temptation of Christ, is about—THE REWARD OF VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

When the last trial was over with our Saviour, we read,—"Then the devil leaveth him, and *behold angels came and ministered unto him.*" Matt. iv: 11. What a blessed change this must have been to him! To have the hated presence of Satan removed, with the horrible thoughts he was suggesting; and instead thereof, to have the angels of God come and visit him, and minister to him; who can imagine what a relief this must have been! How they would congratulate him on the great victory he had just gained over the tempter! How they would talk with him about that bright and beautiful heavenly home that he had left, and about that great work on which he was just entering, and the blessed results that would follow from it, in glory to God, and in salvation to men! This visit of the angels was part of the reward bestowed upon him for the victory he had gained over the temptations of Satan.

And God always rewards his people when they get the victory over temptation. The angels may not come to us, as they came to Jesus, but *a blessing will come*, in one form or

other. We have God's promise for this. He says,—"Blessed is the man that endureth, (or getteth the victory over) the temptation." James i: 12. The blessing here promised is a crown of life in heaven.

This reward in the future will be glorious. No one can tell how great the glory of that crown of life will be! But God rewards his people now, in this life, for their victories over temptation. Job felt sure of this, for while he was in the midst of his long temptation, he said, speaking of God,—"When he hath tried me, *I shall come forth as gold.*" Job xxiii: 10. Here Job teaches us that getting the victory over temptation helps to make our characters *golden.* What a blessed thought this is! There may be some things about us that are mean and selfish. Enduring temptation will change these things, and make them noble and generous. It is like taking things that are of clay, and iron, and brass, and turning them into gold.

And the blessing which God gave to Job for enduring temptation, not only made his character golden, but his possessions, too. He was twice as rich after his great trial as he was before. We read in the last chapter of the book of Job,—that God gave him the same number of children

that he had before his temptation, and twice as many sheep, and oxen, and camels, and asses.

I have just one more story. It shows how a boy was tempted; the victory he gained over his temptation, and the reward which the victory brought to him.

"Johnny," said a farmer to his little boy, "it's time for you to go to the pasture and drive the cows home."

Johnny was playing at ball, and the pasture was a long way off; but he was accustomed to obey promptly, so he started, without a word, as fast as he could go."

Being in a hurry to get back to play, he only half let down the bars, and then hurried the cattle through; and one fine cow, in trying to crowd over, stumbled, and broke her leg.

Johnny stood by the poor suffering creature, and said to himself,—"Now, what shall I do? that is the best cow father has; it will have to be killed, and that will be a great loss to father. What shall I tell him?"

"Tell him," whispered the tempter—the same tempter that came to Jesus,—"tell him you found the bars half down, and the cow lying there."

"No, I can't say that, for that would be a lie."

"Tell him," whispered the tempter again, "that while you were driving the cows, that big boy of farmer Brown's, threw stones, and hurried the cow so that she fell."

"No, no," said Johnny, "I never told a lie yet, and I won't begin now. I'll tell father the truth. It was all my fault. I was in a hurry; I frightened the poor creature, and she fell and broke her leg."

As soon as he had made this brave resolution, he ran home as fast as he could, as if he was afraid the tempter would catch him. He went straight to his father, and told the whole truth. And what did his father do?

He laid his hand on Johnny's head, and said, —"I'm very sorry to lose that cow; but I would rather lose every cow I own, than have my dear boy tell an untruth!" O, how happy Johnny felt then, that God had given him grace to do the right thing. He had been tried, but he had "come forth as *gold.*" Truth is golden, and Johnny had told the truth. Honesty is golden, and Johnny had acted honestly. Honor is a golden thing, and Johnny had behaved honorably towards his father. And he felt in his own heart the reward God gives to those who get the victory over the temptation.

And thus we have spoken of the *temptation* of Christ; what we are *told* about it, and what we are *taught* by it. The lessons taught by it are four. Lesson first—We must expect temptation. Lesson second—There is no sin in being tempted. Lesson third—How to resist temptation. Lesson fourth—The reward of victory over temptation.

The Collect for the First Sunday in Lent comes in beautifully here: "O Lord, who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence that our flesh being subdued unto the spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honor and glory, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen!"